

# Faith and Love Give Hope

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*“. . . remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father” (1 Thessalonians 1:3).*

Faith, hope, and love are closely related in the gospel of Christ. Each virtue helps the others to grow, and on the other hand, a failure of any of the three will hinder the other two. In our meditations on “reaching forward,” we have seen how very important hope is in the Christian’s life. Hope is perhaps the principal thing that moves us toward God and toward heaven. So despair, the loss of hope, is a problem of eternal proportions. Today, let’s see how faith and love can keep us from losing our hope.

## **The hopefulness of faith**

Faith, when all is said and done, comes down to “trust.” It means that, based on the mountain of evidence that God has kept His word in the past, we make the decision to leave the future in His hands. So faith makes possible a hope that is based on trust — trust in the Creator of heaven and earth.

## **The hopefulness of love**

Love is the ultimate optimist. It is not naive, and if the evidence requires a negative assessment, love will go with the evidence. But love is a defender of hope. Rather than give up at the first sign of trouble, love *“bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7).*

So in the gospel, we have faith, hope, and love, these three. But Paul said the *“greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13)*. When all else fails and our hopes hang by a thread, it will always be love that keeps that thread from breaking. How could we give up on the one who has never, not even in his darkest hour, given up on us?

In our text for today, Paul spoke of three things in the Thessalonians’ lives: their work of faith, their labor of love, and their patience of hope. When our work is based on our trust in God’s faithfulness and our labor grows out of a love that is pure and strong, then the hope that is in Christ will produce a steadfastness that would hardly be possible any other way. As long as our hope is fed by a hard-working faith and a long-laboring love, the devil simply doesn’t have what it takes to keep us from going toward God.

“He who despairs wants love and faith, for faith, hope, and love are three torches which blend their light together, nor does the one shine without the other” (Pietro Metastasis).