

A Faithful Steadfast Laborer of Hope

I Thessalonians 1:1-10

“I have been sanctified by the grace of God; I have been set apart to live for His glory”

Introduction: The title of the message this morning is a little long but I believe it describes what as a believer we would like to be.

A. Paul is writing to a group of believers that are doing it right.

1. Look at verse 3 and see how he describes this group of people:

- **constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,**

B. In this verse we see some of the most desirable traits of a believer:

1. First is faithfulness: As believers in Christ we should be compelled to be faithful.

a. Jesus at the close of the parable of the talents gives us this principle concerning faithfulness: Matthew 25:21 (I like the King James translation of this verse)

- **His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.**

b. It is a mark, an attribute of a believer that we are faithful in are service to God.

- It pleases God when with willing hearts and attitudes we are faithful to serve regardless what He asks of us.

= Faithfulness is a desirable trait of a Christian, and it is not just something that happens and then we move on fullness by the very nature of what it is, is an ongoing way of living our life for Christ.

2. Second in this passage Paul describes this group of believers as laborers.

a. They worked at it!

- A life that is lived for Christ is not something that just happens, it is work and not only is it work but it is hard work.

➤ Let's go back to Jesus' parable of talents:

: The master gave to one servant 5 talents, one 2 talents, one 1 talent.

: Then Jesus said the one with 5 talents **Immediately** went to work with them and doubled them, the one with 2 talents did the same he went to work with them and double them, but the one with 1 talent got scared and lazy and just buried the talent.

= Church in order to see the increase God would not have us to grow weary in well doing but to be at work, laboring for His kingdom.

= Having a good Christian work ethic goes far beyond just be a good worker in your job, a laborer for the Kingdom of God should be a desire of heart.

= A laborer in the field is not only something that we should desire but something that God expects from His children.

3. Third in this passage Paul describes this group as steadfast.

a. This word in the passage latterly means endurance as to things or circumstances.

➤ In other words these folks were willing to keep living for the Lord even when circumstance came against them.

- b. I wonder if when we are pushed by life circumstances some of which seem like they will never let up are we willing to be steadfast unmovable from our faith and our walk with God.

= It is a desirable trait of a believer not to be a roller coaster Christian, not to be up and down in the faith but to consistently walk with God.

- 4. Fourth Paul describes these folks as people of hope.
 - a. This word hope means much more than just wishing something will happen this word carries with it an expectation that something is going to happen.
 - These folks expected to be in the presence of God through Jesus it was not something that just wish would happen, it was not something that they thought could happen, they expected it to happen.
 - b. They expected God to do great things and when there is expectation then you begin to see the great things that are happening.

Transition: So here is the picture of doing it right, a description of a group of believers sold out to the glory of God and we can certainly learn a lot about ourselves and where we should be by looking at this example.

- A. But God gives us more than that He gives us the formula to be Faithful steadfast laborers of hope.

Look with me at verse 6-7 **•You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,**

so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

- B. Here is how they got there: # 1 They were Imitators of Jesus.

I. Imitators of Jesus verse 6

A. Paul actually said imitators of us and of the Lord.

1. If we want to have the traits of faithfulness and steadfastness, of living in the hope of Christ and our works to be done for His glory: Then we must imitate Jesus.

- Philippians 2:5-8⁸ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- I Peter 2:21²¹ For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

= To have these traits as a believer we must not only know the steps of Jesus but we must walk the His steps.

Transition: Our desire to be faithful steadfast laborers of hope can only be experience if we do something beginning with imitating Jesus in all aspects of our lives.

A. At that is done by knowing the heart of God and we know the heart of God by receiving the word.

II. Receive the Word verse 6

- A. Paul did not say that they had learned the word or even that they knew the word although they would have done both, it is so important that we hear, and study the words of God.
1. But the key here is that they received the word.
 - They did more than just come to Bible study and learn the word
 - They did more than just come to the preaching service and hear the word.
 - They did more than just read their daily devotions
- They took the word of God into their very being the word became who they were it changed them and shaped them and directed their paths.

- B. Paul said that they did this under much tribulation.
1. They were persecuted for their following the Word of God but they continued in it boldly.
- If it is our desire to be faithful, steadfast laborers of hope in Christ then the word of God must change our lives.

Transition: The Thessalonians were imitators of Christ, they received the word of God and they became an example to believers.

III. **Examples to Believers** verse 7

- A. Church we put a lot of emphasis on being an example in our community so that unbelievers can see what it is to know Christ.
1. We have evangelistic programs, we emphasize living a life as a follower of Christ so that unbelievers will come to a knowledge of who he is.
 - These things are right and true!
 - We must be the light to a lost and dying world.

- Do not let it ever be said that from this pulpit that we have underestimated the need of evangelism.

■ It is the great commission to the believer!

B. But Paul emphasis here is not evangelistic but to be encouragers to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

1. Church in order to be faithful, steadfast ,and a laborer in the hope of Christ we are examples of the faith to one another.

- It is important that we recognize not only the importance of leading others to Christ but also being strong in the faith that other believers may grow strong.

C. Church change, families change, communities of believers change when we set a example of Christ likeness verse looking for ways to critic.

1. We need to lose the critical spirit and love one another as evidence of the love of God in our lives.

Closing: We have lives to live and our desire should be to live faithful, steadfast laborering in the hope of Christ.

A. But lives lived in such a way don't not just happen

1. To have these traits we must:

- Be imitators of Christ: having the attitude of Christ in all dealings.
- Receive the Word of God: Let in penetrate every aspect of our lives shaping us molding us.
- Live as example and encouragers to each other that we would all walk strong and bold together for God's Glory.

