

Faith, Love, and Hope

Paul mentions faith, love, and hope at the beginning and the end of 1 Thessalonians:

- “We always give thanks . . . constantly remembering . . . your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:2–3).
- “Put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation” (5:8).

Paul talks about “faith, hope, and love” in 1 Corinthians 13:13, and he lists “love” last because, he says, it is the most important of the three. In 1 Thessalonians, however, he lists “hope” last because, for this church at this time, the message of hope seems to be what is most important. Paul says that Timothy has brought him a good report regarding the Thessalonians’ “faith and love” (3:6), but he does not mention any good report about them excelling in hope. When he goes on to say that he wants to restore what is lacking in their faith (3:10), many interpreters assume that he is speaking of the missing element of hope. The Thessalonians are famous for their faith (1:8), and they abound in love (3:12; 4:9–10), but they need to be encouraged with a message of hope (4:13, 18).