

# The Watford Word

[www.watfordchurchofchrist.org](http://www.watfordchurchofchrist.org)

## What's on

**Sunday 02 April** - service, 10:30AM. Stefan Wolmarans speaking.

Wednesday 05 April. Hermeneutics: men and women together online (zoom)

**Sunday 09 April** - service, 10:30AM. *Easter Sunday. The men and women at the cross and the tomb.*

**Sunday 16 April** - service, 10:30AM.

**Sunday 23 April** - service, 10:30AM.

**Sunday 30 April** - service, 10:30AM.

## Today's Lesson: 1 Thessalonians Wrap-Up

### Faith, Love and Hope

The book of Thessalonians has been our focus at the start of the year. It also supplies our theme verse for 2023, 'We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.' (1 Thessalonians 1:3 NIV11)

Faith, love and hope permeate the letter, and are mentioned explicitly both in the verse above and in chapter 5 verse 8:

*"But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet." (1 Thessalonians 5:8 NIV11)*

'work': While Paul insists that salvation is all of God, he also insists that faith is busy. Elsewhere he speaks of 'faith working through love' (Galatians 5:6, rsv), and here of faith leading to work. Tyndale

'labour' prompted by love. Paul means more than small deeds of kindness done without hope of reward. The word *kopos* denotes laborious toil,

### A fragment of 1 Thessalonians dating from the 3rd or 4th century

unceasing hardship  
borne for love's sake.  
Tyndale

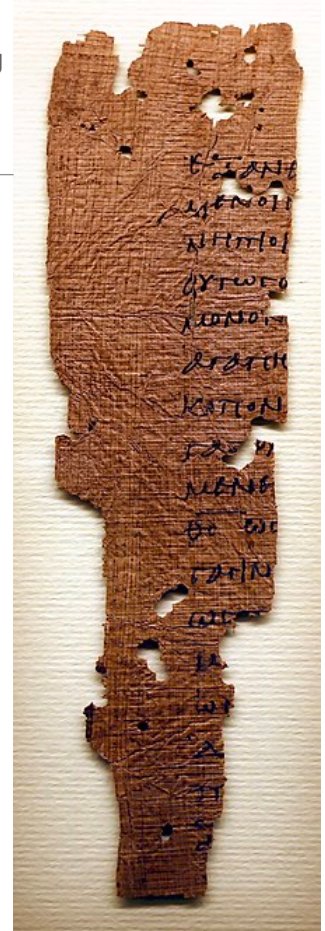
Hypomonē, rendered endurance, means not a negative, passive acquiescence, but an active, manly endurance: 'not the resignation of the passive sufferer, so much as the fortitude of the stout-hearted soldier' (CBSC; see also 2 Thess. 3:5). Hope, in a Christian context, always has an air of certainty about it.

It is a confident expectation, not the unfounded optimism we often mean by the word. Tyndale

Faith...love...hope:

1 Corinthians 13:13 Living by faith, living out our hope and living a life of love are work. Not work to earn anything from God, but work nonetheless. Are we afraid of work? Would we be known as a congregation labouring for God?

'love' - agape. A love that loves whether the object of that love has merit or not. A love that seeks to give rather than receive. Indeed, gives without thought of return.



The love Christ showed us: John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10.

'hope': not a grinding endurance, but an inspired one because our eyes are fixed on Jesus.

See also the three linked here: (Rom. 5:2-5; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5-6; Col. 1:4-5; Heb. 6:10-12; 10:22-24; 1 Pet. 1:21-22).

As we draw the series to a close it is worth reflecting on how God has been working in us through this remarkable letter. In what way has God's Spirit been speaking to you as we have studied Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians? What new convictions do you have? Which old convictions have been renewed? Why not spend some time in prayer and answer the questions overleaf?

- What has God taught you about himself?
- What has God taught you about church community life?
- What has God taught you about worship?
- What has God taught you about yourself?

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## Palm Sunday

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It is Palm Sunday next week. What does this mean? It is one of only a few incidents recorded in all four gospels, so it must be highly significant. You may find some of the following information interesting.

Palm Sunday is also known as Passion Sunday, because it marks the beginning of Holy Week, which leads up to Easter Sunday.

The tradition of using palm branches to celebrate Palm Sunday comes from the biblical account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, where he was greeted by crowds of people waving palm branches and shouting "Hosanna!" (meaning "Save us now").

In some cultures, other types of branches or plants are used to celebrate Palm Sunday, such as olive branches, willow branches, or boxwood.

In some countries, it is traditional to create elaborate palm weavings or sculptures for Palm Sunday, such as the "palaspas" in the Philippines, which are intricate palm frond designs that are used to decorate churches and homes.

Palm Sunday is also associated with the ancient Jewish festival of Passover, which commemorates the Israelites' liberation from slavery in Egypt. This connection is significant because Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was seen by many as a fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

In many Christian traditions, the palms used in Palm Sunday celebrations are saved and burned to create ashes for Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of the Lenten season.

What is the significance of Palm Sunday for you? How does it help your faith? Have a look at the accounts in Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19 and John 12 and see what you find.

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## AIM UK&I

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The Old Testament Survey module took place on recently. If you missed it, but would like to join in and watch the recordings, please speak to me or email [courses@aimukandireland.com](mailto:courses@aimukandireland.com). The website [www.aimukandireland.com](http://www.aimukandireland.com) contains more information.

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## Watford Media

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YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj9Qa8D9zumJZdoAtARDUww>

Podcast: <https://www.podbean.com/pu/pbblog-aiinq-raef9o>