

The image shows a high-angle view of ancient Roman ruins. In the foreground, a wide, paved stone path leads towards the background. To the right, a series of semi-circular arches, some with red-tiled roofs, are visible. The ruins are made of weathered stone and brick. In the background, more arches and a long, straight wall with a series of small, square openings can be seen. The overall scene is one of historical significance and architectural grandeur.

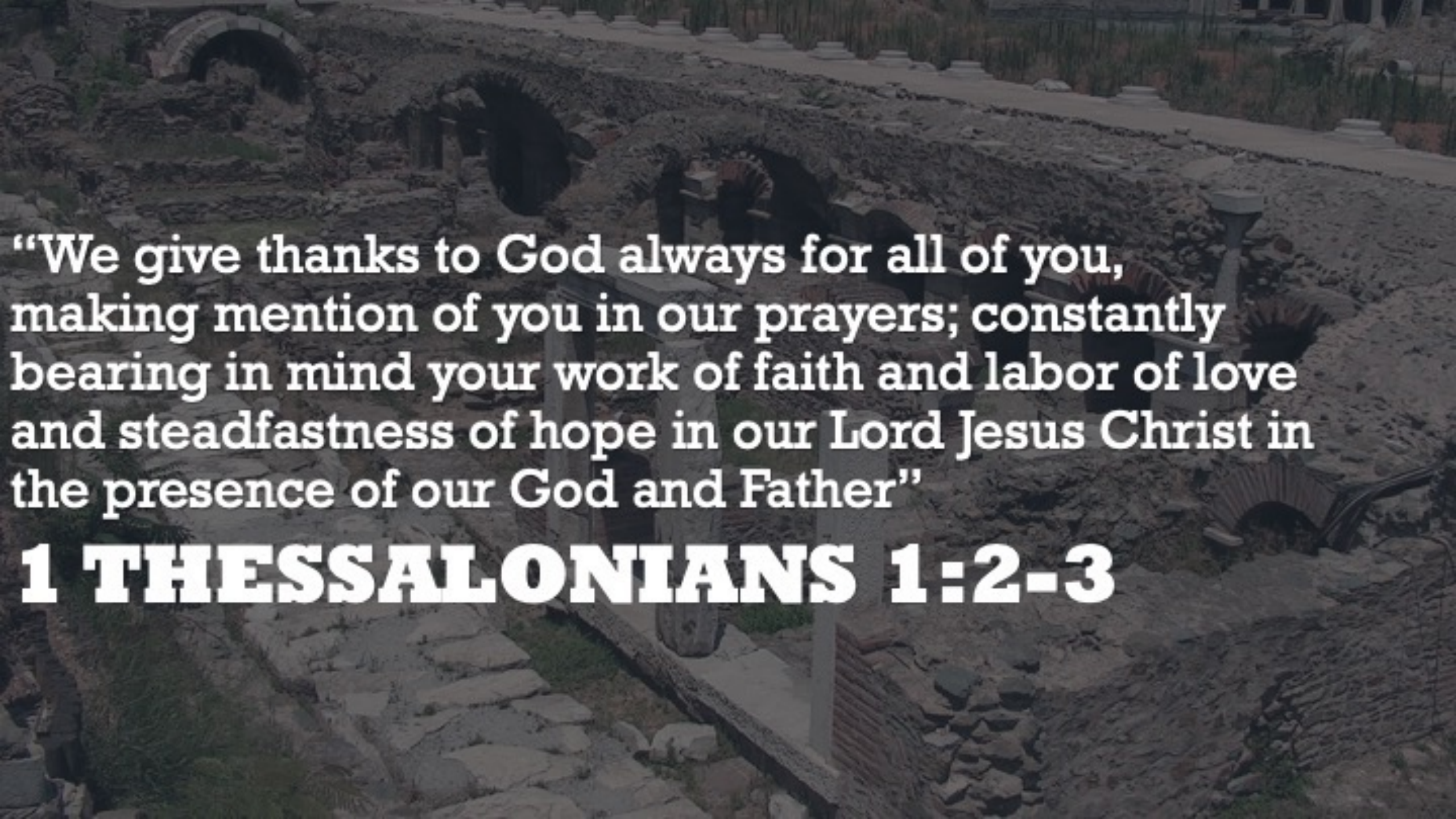
# **LABOR OF LOVE**





**THESSALONICA**





“We give thanks to God always for all of you,  
making mention of you in our prayers; 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”

**1 THESSALONIANS 1:2-3**





## **FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE**

This is not the only scripture that connects these three qualities. In fact, the one that probably comes to mind first is 1 Corinthians 13:13. Additionally, 1 Thessalonians 5:8 encourages the reader to “put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.” A number of other passages connect at least two (1 Peter 1:21, Galatians 5:6, Romans 5:5).



# WORK OF FAITH

- “I think we’re saved by works alone!” vs. “I think we’re saved by our faith alone!” While one side trots out Romans 3:28 and the other side waves James 2:24, today’s text connects works AND faith.
- Paul does not see a conflict between the two. In fact, they appear to be inseparable and interwoven! The phrase either means the Thessalonians were working by their faith or they had a faith that was shown in their work.
- In any case, this passage is not alone in connecting “faith” and “work” – 2 Thessalonians 1:11, John 6:29, Galatians 5:6 James 2:14ff, John 3:36, Romans 2:13. Faith IS work, friends! It is active, living, and practical – the expression of our unwavering belief in God and His promises.





## **LABOR OF LOVE**

Contrary to the typical notion that love is merely a feeling (and always one that comes easy and feels good), the Bible writers frequently point out how hard it can be to love others – spouses (Titus 2:4, 1 Pet. 3:7, Col. 3:19, Hosea), children (Col. 3:21, Ps. 103:13), our neighbors (Lk. 10:25-37), even our enemies (Matt. 5:43-48). It's even hard to love other Christians at times, which is why we're so frequently reminded to do it (1 John 4:19-21, 3:15-18, 1 Cor. 13, Rom. 12:9-10, 1 Pet. 4:8).



# STEADFAST HOPE

- This points us back to our theme for the month (“perseverance” from 2 Peter 1:6). Last week we looked at a passage (Romans 5:4-5) that connected perseverance and hope. They are in the same family, so to speak.
- Hope must be steadfast, otherwise it isn’t really hope. After all, can we say that we have “hope” in a favorite football team if the quarterback tosses an interception on the first possession of the first game of the season? Throwing our arms in the air and exclaiming, “Well, that’s it! Season’s over!” isn’t exactly the definition of “steadfast hope.”
- Instead, look to the promises of God (Who is faithful!) and hope in Him with conviction (Heb. 10:23, 1 Cor. 15:54ff, 1 Pet. 1:13).