

2 Thessalonians 3:1-18

Living Responsibly

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, ²and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.³ But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. ⁴And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you. ⁵Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Intro: My wife Denise and I – 30 years married this Tuesday – grown up a bit – many of you have watched- 26.5 years have been with all of you.

A)We are at that place in life – Empty Nesters – Dog – enjoying it

B)Three adult kids – all married – all doing well! Living Responsibly!

C)That is what you want as a Parent right? Kids walking with Jesus

1)Living Responsibly – taking everything you poured into them and watching them put it into practice. – Nothing Better

If you were with us in 1 Thessalonians – you remember –Paul spoke with Tender words – describing this group of believers.

A) 1 Thessalonians 2:7 - But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.

B)He describes himself as a mother nursing her babies – doesn't get any more tender than that.

1)And in v.10 as a Father who challenges his kids.

C)Paul assumed the role of both parents in ministering to the church in Thessalonica – that is how he felt about them.

So now as he closes out this 2nd letter – FINAL THOUGHTS –

A)After clearing up their confusion about the rapture and the 2nd coming – giving them encouragement to STAND FAST

B)Paul concludes this letter by giving them some instructions about living responsibly.

C)3 Final exhortations – first 2 are found in v.1-5

1st Pray: A Praying Church is a healthy Church!

A)Pray that the word would run swiftly - V.1 - running swiftly – Horse – or rushing river

B)Idea of the word going forth with Power and going forth unhindered.

1)Pray for the Words impact!

C)Can I encourage you to do the same: The word of God would go forth from Calvary Vista unhindered/ in Power.

D)Impact our body – community - generation Last century, God did a mighty work in London thru a giant of the faith named Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

A) Church sat 7,000 people – packed out several times each week. His sermons are studied to this day.

B) The story is told that one Sunday afternoon, a contingency of ministers came to the massive Metropolitan Tabernacle to observe him.

Assuming the stout man at the side of the building wearing bib overalls to be the janitor, they asked, *“Sir, would you kindly show us the power plant of this huge structure?”*

“Certainly,” the man replied, leading them to the basement.

As he opened the door at the end of a hallway, the ministers expected to see a mighty furnace.

Instead, they saw over two hundred people on their knees praying on Sunday afternoon for the upcoming evening service.

“He said Prayer, gentlemen, is the power plant of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.”

See the man in the overalls was Spurgeon himself—and he knew where the power for that ministry came from.

Spurgeon realized that the key to his preaching was that there were people committed to praying for the Ministry.

D)We don't have a basement – but I would be so satisfied in knowing there were 100's of you

praying daily for the ministry here at Calvary Vista.

1) Praying the word....swiftly – power/unhindered Families – Pastors – elders - Website

1st Pray!

#1 The Word would run swiftly

#2 The Opposition would be removed. V.2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

A) In Paul's case it was actual wicked men. – There was a physical opposition.

B) In our time here in the USA – not the case – But there is always – spiritual opposition.

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Ephesians 6:12

C) Listen: The Devil doesn't like what we are doing – doesn't like to see people worshipping Jesus – {WHY always seeking to distract

Cc) He doesn't like us - **studying the word**

1) Why your hardest day – Sundays – family chaos

D) Can I encourage you to pray: Every time we get together – every time there is an outreach – all the studies – youth

1) Pray – God would remove the opposition – the Word of God would run swiftly – go forth unhindered and in Power - **CAN WE DO THAT?**

E) Reminder – phone or whatever – Pray for Calvary Vista

1st Pray:

2nd Reminder: The Lord is faithful V.3-5

³ But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one. ⁴ And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

⁵ Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

I love the centrality of Christ that is attached to Paul's preaching

A) Emphasis is on what Jesus did – Jesus Does – way more than what we are to be doing – That is a great example. – I try to follow

B) Notice his description of the Lord's faithfulness

- He will establish you - Set you firm
- He will guard you – Hand of protection
- He will help you follow through
- He will direct your heart

C) Paul's emphasis was on what the Lord was doing!

But the believers did have a role to play in their spiritual development

A) Their part was to follow through. – Use what Jesus had given them by walking in it – living it.

B) God doesn't just pour spiritual maturity and stability into us. He works it in us through our cooperation with His will.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.”

Philippians 2:12,13

C) Fear and trembling speaks of taking our walk with Jesus seriously

1) Not a casual lackadaisical approach –

D) Idea that God has blessed us with so much – TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!

WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION

A) **Work it out** – Develop it – let it grow – experience the fullness of it

B) **For it is God who is working in you both to will – (affects your desires)**

1) When your life is yielded to Him – He changes your desires –

C) **Both to will and to do** – He not only changes the desires but he empowers you to follow through on those desires.

D) So in the Christian life there is this balance between our surrender – our willingness to do what God says

1) Him filling us with what we need to do just that!

Peter said something similar in His epistle: 2 Peter 1:2-4

“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain

to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

A)He has supplied us with everything that pertains to LIFE – true living

And godliness – Living right – all connected to Jesus!

B)Divine nature: Born again – born of the spirit – The spirit of the living God is in you and me.

C)That being the case: Peter continues -
5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 2 Peter 1:5-7

D)Add to your faith is literally – supply your faith – in other words – take from the supply we have in Jesus – and utilize it – feed it!

E)Christian growth and maturity – happens when you realize that all that Jesus is – is available to you on a daily basis.

1)Learn to decrease so that HE might increase.

So Paul’s final words – Living responsibly – He exhorts the believers to 1ST Pray AND to 2ND REMEMBER the Lord is faithful. – follow thru 3rd Work hard – Read V.6-15

A)Considering the profound theological instruction found in the Thessalonian letters, we might wonder why Paul would devote such a significant amount of time on the mundane idea of work.

B)Almost seems out of place – but not really –

C)See For Paul, Christianity was worthless unless it found its way into the daily fabric of life.

D)What believers truly believe will have an impact on how they live.

1)Not just here – but in the everyday affairs of life. Including – in their profession – their work.

The problem in Thessalonica was that there were certain people in the Church that were not working –

A)Paul refers to them as disorderly v.6 – Then identifies who they are in v. 11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.

B)Paul points out that there were those who were not working – had become busybodies – hindering others

1)Idleness leads to being busy bodies -

C)WORK KEEPS US OUT OF TROUBLE.

The person who rows the boat usually doesn't have time to rock it.

But there is another reason why this was so important!

A)Our work ethic impacts our witness!

B) If we take God’s Word seriously, then we will take it to work with us

C)Swindoll said, “show me a lazy, irritating Christian on the job, & I will show you an office, store, customer, or shop, that isn’t interested in his message!”

Some Bible commentators think that – the actions of those Paul refers to as the disorderly was directly linked to their believing Jesus was coming soon.

A)Why worry about working and paying Bills – Jesus is coming – pretty soon we will be out of here.

B)There are believers who live that way today: They are lazy – they get themselves in debt – No concern for the future – “out of here”

C)Paul wanted the believers in Thessalonica and us to know – that Living in light of the Lord’s return – should have the opposite affect.

D)Hardest working – Witness – doing it for Jesus Note v.6 “The tradition they received from Paul ” refers specifically to Paul’s previous teaching on the subject of work. 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

A)Right before Paul starts talking to them about the rapture – end times

B) He is talking to them about their WORK ETHIC

But we encourage you, brothers . . . to seek to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, so that you may walk properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone.

C) Consistent with Scripture

Proverbs 15:19 **The way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns, But the way of the upright is a highway.**

Proverbs 14:23 **“All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty**

C) The Romans said, “By doing nothing, men learn to do evil.”

The Jewish rabbis taught, **“He who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief.”**

“Idle hands and an Idle minds make for the Devils workshop.”

“The man who rolls up his sleeves seldom loses his shirt.”

The hen is the only one who can lay around all day and still be a producer”

BUT Paul didn't just teach them He showed them V.7-9 ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ⁹ not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

A) Paul recognized the vital importance of matching of his life with his words.

B) Work hours in the middle eastern culture was different from our work hours today

1) Hot and there was no Air-conditioning

C) Work would start early in the morning – Sun up – work until about noon

1) At noon – too hot – take a break in the afternoon hours – eat – sleep – rest

D) Then in the late afternoon – cooled down – Go back and put in a few more hours.

E) Paul didn't want to be a burden to these new believers – so he made tents for a living –

1) That's how he supported himself there.

He would work in the morning –

A) then in the afternoon – when everyone was taking a break – PAUL WOULD PREACH

B) In the late afternoon – back to work – and then in the evening – Paul would preach again.

C) That is what Paul means when he says he toiled – night and day

1) Toil = worked to the point of exhaustion –

D) **THAT WAS PAUL'S EXAMPLE** – His Point - no reason these people were not TO BE working

E) “The appropriate corrective for such a lifestyle is simple: **get to work and be quiet** (3:12).”

1) MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

What if they refuse?

What do we do with those who are lazy and disorderly?

Withdraw from them. V.6

Do not keep company with them v.13

There are two ideas connected to these directives

A) One: is you don't have time to get caught up in their gossip

B) When your working hard – and when you are caught up in the work of the Lord –

1) you don't have time to be a busybody – gossip.

Sometimes other Pastors – pull me into controversies Lived off of - 1 Peter 5:1

A) Shepherd the flock of God Among you.

Don't worry what's going on over there.....

Aa) To be honest – I have my hands full with you all

B) I marvel at these people who spend all this time – chats and in debates on Facebook.

1) I don't have time for that- couldn't get into if I wanted to.

C) If you have time for that stuff – TAKE A BREAK – be quiet and get busy for the Lord – **FIND IT A LOT MORE REWARDING!**

1) Not sure what to do – talk to Pastor Steve – plenty around here to do

D) So the first idea is protection for yourself – avoid them – so you can work hard – not sucked into

The 2nd idea is for correction for them.

A) Don't fellowship with them – withdraw – maybe when they see that no wants to hang out with them – they will get the picture and get back to work

B) V.15 do not keep company with him, **that he may be ashamed.** {Feel it and see their error

¹⁵ Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, **but admonish him** as a brother.

C) Church discipline is always meant to be for the purpose of correction and redemption.

1) Even in Corinth – Man sleeping with step-mom. – **Turn him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh – soul might be saved.** – It worked!

D) This case – Paul says withdraw from him – don't keep company – so that hopefully – he will see his error – feel ashamed

1) When no one wants to get into idle conversations because they are too busy working and serving Jesus – HE WILL FEEL ASHAMED.

E) And get back to work himself!

I want to close our time this morning by considering Paul's word to those who are working hard - V.13 Do not grow weary in doing Good!

A) It is easy to grow tired in doing good – especially when it seems – no one notices – no impact

B) Faithfully working hard at your job – no one seems to appreciate it –

1) God sees – he is pleased

C) Faithfully serving the Lord – feel like – nothing is really happening –

1) Why am I doing this? – Why am I spending all this time?

D) Paul wrote a similar word to the Galatians **⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.**
– Galatians 6:9

Listen: At your Job – working hard – no appreciation – getting passed over for promotions

A) God sees – he will reward you – His time – Maybe heaven –

B) **“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”** – Colossians 3:17

C) Working for Jesus –

Serving in ministry – there is a reward coming

A) The reward is not in results – the reward is for the Faithful – Steward – that is what we are.....

B) Steward is to be found faithful

C) The writer of Hebrews – gave us this

“For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” Hebrews 6:10

D) One last thing:

Realize the Importance of Rest – spiritual renewal

One man challenged another to an all-day wood chopping contest.

The challenger worked very hard, stopping only for a brief lunch break.

The other man had a leisurely lunch and took several breaks during the day.

At the end of the day, the challenger was surprised and annoyed to find that the other fellow had chopped substantially more wood than he had.

"I don't get it," he said. "Every time I checked, you were taking a rest, yet you chopped more wood than I did."

"But you didn't notice," said the winning woodsman, that every time when I sat down to rest." I was sharpening my ax

A certain amount of rest is needed for everyone. It sharpens the ax.

A) Spiritual renewal