

The Now and the Not Yet

Lesson 3

2 Thessalonians 3

August 23, 2020

Continue the Mission

Introduction

Idleness and disorder can cause a church not only to be ineffective but can also directly affect the health of the church. Jesus has laid out a mission for us, and He calls us to work together with intent and focus to see that mission through. If believers are not united in the purpose and direction, that mission will suffer.

There were members in the church at Thessalonica that were not focused on the right things. Paul wrote to their leadership instructing them on how to remedy the situation and how they were to act to bring a unity of mission to their church. Some in the church were idle, and others were busy but misdirected. They were engaged in “excited idleness” and were expecting the rest of the church to support them.

Paul reminded the Thessalonian leadership that God is faithful and that our response should be to work daily with our hands (and brains) and that he had modeled this when he visited with them. This work will serve as a witness to the world. And it will serve as a model to those in the church that are not focusing their efforts on productive work.

When Christ returns, we don’t want Him to find us idle or unproductive. Instead we want Him to find us obediently working to impact the lives of those around us in preparation for Him. Jesus is coming again, and he is coming for His church: The Bride of Christ. Let us work diligently, reminding ourselves that His return could happen at any moment of any day.

Memory verse: “And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.”--2 Thessalonians 3:13

Pray and read 2 Thessalonians 3. What questions or observations do you have about these passages?

What do the passages say?

1. For what things did Paul tell the Thessalonian church to pray? (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2)
2. What does Paul say that the Lord will do for us? (2 Thessalonians 3:3, 5, 16)
3. From what kind of believer did Paul tell the Thessalonians to stay away? (2 Thessalonians 3:6)
4. What rule did Paul give the Thessalonian church? (2 Thessalonians 3:10)
5. What should we never tire of doing? (2 Thessalonians 3:13)
6. How did Paul tell the Thessalonian church to act toward the people who were being idle? (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

What does the passage mean?

1. Paul spent three verses talking about the importance of prayer and faithfulness before he wrote about the action to which Christ calls us. How are faith and prayerfulness connected to staying focused and busy in the work of the Lord? (2 Thessalonians 3:1-3)
2. Paul wrote that he had commanded the Thessalonians to keep away from idle believers. What does it say about the seriousness of this flippant attitude of labor that Paul felt the need to give this command? (2 Thessalonians 3:6)
3. What do you imagine that Paul and his friends did to help out when they visited the Thessalonians? (2 Thessalonians 3:7-10)
4. How are staying busy and doing the work that Christ put before us different than being a “busybody?” Why did Paul think the busybodies were dangerous? (2 Thessalonians 3:11-12)

5. Paul taught the importance of work to the church at Thessalonica by instruction and by example. What are 2-3 reasons that the believers at Thessalonica must learn this lesson? (2 Thessalonians 3:7-10, 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12)

Applying the passage

1. Paul described some of the believers in Thessalonica as busybodies as if they were active, without being productive. How does this contrast to the productive work that Paul explained and demonstrated, and why is this important? (2 Thessalonians 3:6-13)

