

2 THESSALONIANS 3

Don't Grow Weary

Paul begins this letter with commendation.

- Their faith is growing! This young church is going thru what we all go thru, the drama of life. Thru the trials and heartache in life, we learn and grow as we deal with that drama.

Next Paul gives the church instruction in doctrine.

- Thessalonica was struggling theologically, specifically about the return of Christ.
 - They thought they missed the resurrection
 - They thought they missed the rapture

And finally (what we will look today at in chapter 3)

- Exhortation in godly behavior
- Paul will encourage and instruct this church, ***don't grow weary***

Read ***2 Thessalonians 3:1-5***

2 Thessalonians 3:1

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you,

Paul asks for prayer.

Prayer ***for us*** Paul, Silas and Timothy.

Prayer that ***that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified.***

Prayer is vital in our lives as followers of Christ.

Prayer is the opportunity to take everything to the Creator of the Universe.

- Our thoughts
- Our struggles
- Our victories
- Our needs

What is so important about prayer?

Luke 18:1

.....that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

If you have a strong prayer life, you will have a strong Christian walk.

If you have a scattered and spotty prayer life, that probably reflects in your Christian walk as well.

You pray sometimes? You don't pray sometimes.

You obey sometimes? You don't obey sometimes.

You care sometimes? You don't care sometimes.

We need to spend time with Jesus! And one of those ways is in prayer!

God loves to hear from you!

1 Timothy 2:8

I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

We should pray, lifting up our hands and pray, not in anger or with doubt.

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Matthew 26, Jesus told his disciples to pray so they wouldn't fall into temptation.

Matthew 26:41

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

We should pray to keep ourselves away from temptation. A discipline we should strive for!

So what do we pray?

Matthew 6:8-13

....For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

"In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

We acknowledge God as God, and honor Him.

We pray for God's will in the situation.

We pray that He reigns in our lives (on earth) Just like He reigns above.

We pray for His daily provision.

We pray for forgiveness, just like we forgive.

We pray that we can follow Him with clear direction that is away from anything that is ungodly.

We acknowledge that God is King in our lives and know that He will never lack any resources ever when we are in need!

We give Him the glory for all that He will do in what we have requested.

pray for us, that the *word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified*

This is an interesting request from Paul.

KJV

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that *the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:*

NIV

As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that *the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.*

ESV

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that *the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you,*

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How does ***the word of God run swiftly?***

Our Bible reading earlier this past week.

Psalm 147:15

He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly.

Turn to ***Isaiah 55:10-11***

***"For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.***

God has promised that His Word would be free to perform its work!
But as with many of God's promises, we are expected to take this promise in faith, and in prayer, to ask God to perform the promise for His glory.

Paul is asking for prayer, for God's will in his life. It is actually God's will in all of our lives as believers in Jesus! ***that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you***

I would like to give you a few things to how ***the word of the Lord may run swiftly***

I have 4 things that I learned from my pastor:

1. The word of God runs swiftly when we have **an open door**.
Jesus speaking to the church in Philadelphia:

Revelation 3:8

"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

We need to pray for an open door with our unsaved friends and family.
We need to pray for an open door for Calvary Plymouth.
That we have an open door to reach our friends and family for Jesus.

2. The word of God runs swiftly when we have **the boldness to share it**

We need boldness to share the love of Jesus!
What do we share? The Gospel of Jesus Christ!
Some of you may be thinking:

- Where do I start?
- Kenny said not to be weird

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We start with prayer! Pray for an open door!

Act 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Paul was a well-educated man and very eloquent, yet he prayed for boldness.

Ephesians 6:18-19

praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,

The secret behind our boldness? Prayer

3. The word of God runs swiftly when we have **the supply of the Spirit**

Paul was intelligent and articulate yet he spoke very simply.

He wanted to make sure that people had their attention on the Lord and not himself.

Ephesians 6:18-19

praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,

We need the supply of the Spirit.

4. The word of God runs swiftly when we have **a burden for the lost**

John 4:35

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

Behold the harvest is ready, don't wait!

The woman at the well who was just saved, walked into the city and shared Jesus.

We need to have that same heart. Pray that we will be burdened for people that don't know Jesus!

For us? Calvary Plymouth?

Pray for us! That the word of God will go forth! Pray for the church, pray for us!

Now, there is a catch here, so be careful!

Paul writes ***just as it is with you***

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If you are praying for Calvary Plymouth, the church, you are praying for YOU!
You are the church!
This becomes a prayer for you!
You are the hands and feet of Jesus. The church!

"Great pastors make great churches (congregations), I believe great congregations make great pastors." Ed Taylor

As you are praying for Calvary Plymouth,

- Be praying that we will all be able to meet together soon!
- Pray for the church leadership
- Pray for our future worship team
- Pray for our kid's ministry teachers Pray for our hospitality workers.
- Pray for us, all of us (make a list)
- Pray for me as your pastor

Make that list, pull it out a couple of times every day and lift up your friends, family and Calvary Plymouth.

2 Thessalonians 3:2

and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

Remember Paul, Silas and Timothy had to leave Thessalonica after only 3 weeks!
There is a physical opposition and a spiritual opposition.
Paul was beaten and imprisoned and even threatened for his faith.

unreasonable and wicked men were part of Paul's life and part of ours.

How interesting it is that Christians are sometimes considered "intolerant" and the world is sometimes angered by the Gospel.

There is a contrast here to the next verse. ***for not all have faith.***

2 Thessalonians 3:3

But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful

Are you focused on men or on the Lord?
Men will disappoint you, but God is faithful!

Paul reminds them of that their faith is in the Lord, not in Paul or any other teacher that comes their way.

- Do you know that the Lord WILL establish you?
- Do you know that the Lord WILL guard you from the evil one?

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Now I often hear from people that really struggle in certain areas of their lives make comments like:

- I have prayed and God doesn't answer
- I don't feel like God loves me
- I am being attacked by the enemy

Yet with further inquiry, there is nothing consistent about their walk with the Lord.

- Their prayer life is spotty at best
- Their time in God's word is next to nothing
- They seldom go to church
- They spend too much time alone and not with godly people

Are you making God a priority in your life?

God will not ***establish you and guard you*** if you will not allow Him to!

If you are trying to lose weight and you walk into the bakery every day, yet you don't buy anything; why are you going in there?

You will eventually be tempted to buy and eat something that you say you don't want to eat.

You want to lose weight but you do discipline yourself to accomplish that goal.

Is it really a goal? Or are you just saying all the right things to make yourself feel better?

The time will come when you have to step on the scale! Reality will set in very quickly.

Paul has taught us about God's will and call in your life!

Go back and read ***1 Thessalonians 4:1-12*** or go to the website and listen to the study, "God's will for your life."

Matthew 6:21

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

God has laid everything before you, will accept it? Will you follow Him?

Turn to Mark 10

Mark 10:17-21

Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God."

"You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'

And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."

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Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

We have to be honest, honest with ourselves.
Do we really want to follow Jesus?
Do we trust Him?
If we do, then we need to do what He says!

2 Thessalonians 3:3

But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

2 Thessalonians 3:4-5

And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

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

Paul does not have a false hope in the church. In spite of their struggles, Paul knows that his ***confidence*** is not in the church but ***in the Lord!***
And Paul is teaching the Thessalonians this same perspective.

Sometimes we try and fail right? But we keep on trying!
Paul knows what they ***are doing*** and ***what they will be doing***.
Following the teaching Paul has given them.

Because Paul is trusting in the Lord.
Paul knows that the Lord will ***direct*** their ***hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ!***

Does God love you? YES!
Is God patient with you? YES!

This should encourage you! Don't let past failures hold you back, move forward in God's instruction! God's word!

So now Paul will address a specific problem in the church.

Read ***2 Thessalonians 3:6-15***

In Paul's 1st letter he says:

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly,

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2 Thessalonians 3:6

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who **walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.**

Who **walks** disorderly. A military term (military parade, in ranks)
Continue reading...

2 Thessalonians 3:7

For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for **we were not disorderly among you;**

Paul, Silas and Timothy were an example to the Thessalonians.
An example that was the opposite of disorderly.

2 Thessalonians 3:8-9

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, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

So the disorderly conduct that is going on in the church?
People were mooching. They are showing up to eat, yet not doing any work.

Paul was an excellent example among the Thessalonians, in that he worked hard to support his own needs. This wasn't because apostles like Paul didn't have the right to request support. Instead, it was because he wanted to set a good example of hard work and prove false any accusation that he preached the Gospel for personal gain.

Paul as a minister of the Gospel had the right to be supported.
Yet for this young church, he didn't want to be a burden on them so, he worked.
Paul was a tent maker and he supported himself in the ministry in Thessalonica.
Yet it is biblical for the pastor to be supported by the church. Here Paul didn't demand it.
Missy and I are extremely grateful for the support we have from the States and from Calvary Plymouth. Thank you!

Now Paul is going to be very specific:

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

For even when we were with you, we commanded you this:

If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a **disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.**

Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

Paul is not addressing people that cannot work. He is addressing people that **will not work**.
This is disorderly, this shouldn't be happening!
They **are not working at all but are busybodies!**

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Busybody-to bustle about uselessly, to busy one's self about trifling, needless or useless matters. -used apparently of a person officiously inquisitive about other's affairs.

Do you know someone like this?
They know everything about everybody and everything!
They spend hours on YouTube and watching the news.
They are always wanting to know what you are doing? Why you are doing it?
Yet they will never stop and evaluate their own life.

Paul is warning us about these people!
They are to work and eat their own bread, quietly!

If you are a busybody? STOP IT!
If you are not sure but you think you are a busybody? STOP IT!

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Church discipline is a tough thing to do.
I have seen it carried out the right way and the wrong way!

First, Church discipline is not the Holy Spirit Police Force.
We do not have guys standing in the door way or hanging out in the back of the service looking to put the hammer down on people.

Church discipline is more like a father teaching his child.

When our kids were younger, we often took family walks.
Our youngest son Tobey, loved to run.
He wanted to run as far ahead as he possibly could.
I told him that he needed to stay in my line of vision. If I couldn't see him he was too far away.

So he would run ahead and look back. If he could see me, he thought it was ok.
But I would walk without my glasses. His vision was better than mine.

He couldn't understand why my perception of too far away was different than his.
I wasn't doing this because I was trying to be mean or trying to keep him isolated.
I was doing this for his protection.
If he ran too far away I would tell him to come back. He needed to come back.
If he decided that he wasn't going to come back, he knew that he would be disciplined.
Sometimes it was a verbal warning, sometimes it was not being allowed on our walk.
And sometimes.....

Proverbs 13:24

***He who spares his rod hates his son,
But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.***

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Tobey learned that there were boundaries in his life from dad. Boundaries that protected him and kept him safe.

Discipline always comes from an attitude of love and teaching or correction. Not from anger!

So what should this look like biblically? Turn to Matthew 18

Matthew 18:15-17

"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

But if he will not hear, take with you 1 or 2 more, that 'by the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses every word may be established.'

And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector."

When church discipline is done correctly, I can tell you from experience, that this is a wonderful healing process for all involved.

Most of the time, vs 15 is as far as it goes!

The heart of this teaching from Jesus is the love of the Father toward us. Just before this (you can look later) Jesus is teaching about the shepherd that leaves the 99 for the lost sheep.

This is an amazing picture of God's love and grace, not the Holy Spirit Police Force.

But wait, I skipped a verse.....

2 Thessalonians 3:13

But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.

It is not easy to be disciplined.

- Dealing with struggles in our lives? Not easy
- Parenting? Not easy
- Friendships? Not easy
- Work? Not easy

These are encouraging words from Paul to us. He tells the Galatian church the same thing.

Galatians 6:9

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

And Paul closes this letter:

2 Thessalonians 3:16-18

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.

The Lord be with you all.

The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

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The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The peace in our lives comes from God Himself!
Not thru Paul, not thru a pastor or a church. It comes directly from the Lord!

And Paul's signature salutation, grace!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!