

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

April 28, 2024

Work: A Gift From God

Sermon 4

Good morning / Final chapter / 2 Thess. 3:6-18 main text

Good morning church! We come to our final chapter in 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 as we will be looking at verses 6-18 in our main text for this morning.

This section summed up / Paul addressing topic of work / laziness in Thes. church

The final section of 2 Thessalonians can be summed up by Paul as addressing the topic of work and laziness amongst some of the congregants of the Thessalonica church.

This section / importance of work / why it matters that we work / matters how we work

This section gives us a wonderful example from Paul on the importance of work and why it matters that we work and that it matters how we work.

In lieu of culture's view on work / look at what God says about work

In lieu of our current culture's view of work we will also take a look at what God has to say about why we should work.

Assigned oral history project in high school / 2-3 generations older / Interviews

I remember I was assigned an oral history project my junior year of high school. This project consisted of interviewing someone 2-3 generations older than us about their life. We had to identify a subject to interview, write out our interview questions and then consider follow up questions before setting up our interview.

I interviewed my grandmother who has since passed away a couple of years ago.

Consistent with each interviewee / views on work / had to make ends meet / opportunities

As students in the class, it was very consistent that each interviewee had the same views on work. Most all who were interviewed were 1st or 2nd generation American citizens. Almost all of them could remember their experience with migrating over to the U.S. and how difficult it was to make ends meet but that there was an opportunity in free commerce to provide enough to give the family basic food and clothing.

This was the American dream that people risked their lives to have.

Expected / family members to work / helped to provide sustenance family needs

It was expected for all able-bodied family members to work to help provide the sustenance the family needed to survive.

Many lived through great depression / had nothing / reused everything

Most of those interviewed lived through the great depression and knew what it was like to have nothing and to reuse everything.

Grandma / reusing zip locks / Country Crock Tupperware / Cheap & convenient

How many of you can remember grandma not only hanging the clothes out to dry but hanging the already used Ziplock bags out to dry after washing the peanut butter and jelly

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off from inside of them? My grandma's Tupperware were reused Country Crock butter tubs. It was cheap and convenient...unless you were in search for the butter.

How very different our world is today with how we view work.

America today / Closest its ever been to Greek culture / Paul's day

America today is probably the closest it has ever been in its history to the Greek culture's view on work in Paul's day.

When migrating to America / Land of opportunity / Many perished / For work

When people were migrating to America, over 100 years ago, to the "land of opportunity," some didn't make it. They perished on the journey over. They risked their lives to migrate to America so that they could work for basic needs. The work was honest work.

Today / cutting corners / get rich quick / little labor / work to supply leisure

Today, we see people wanting to cut corners, get rich quick with little labor and investment. Many work mainly to supply the needs of their leisure.

Grandma's generation had nothing / Held onto things they owned for lifetime

My grandma's generation literally had nothing compared to what people own today. The things they owned they used and held onto for a lifetime. Some of those artifacts have been passed down to us.

Today, we own a lot of stuff! And we like to dispose of it!

Youth garage sale

We used to run a garage sale at my last church in Maple Valley as a youth fundraiser.

Took in items Sunday after church / 10,000 sqft

We took in items from the community beginning after church on a Sunday and set up and priced items for the next 4 days. This garage sale was probably 10,000 square feet of space.

Filled up 10,000 sqft / "no way people will have this much stuff next year"

Every year we had the garage sale and filled up all 10,000 square feet and every year I think, "there is no way people will have this much stuff next year, right?" Wrong. There was definitely junk that people donated but there were also some really good donations that came in as well.

The cycle of the garage sale / donate / buy / move old to garage / move new to house

Every year people unload their 3 car garages to donate to the church garage sale so that someone else can come by and purchase items to replace current items they have in their houses and move out their old items to their three car garages.

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Sometimes we would even see a garage sale item reappear in future years.

Time we would save if we picked one day and exchanged

Think of how much time we would all save if we just all picked one day out of the year and opened up all of our 3-car garages. Anyone at any time during the day could just come and take out of your garage whatever they liked best and moved it to their own garage.

Work work work.../

If you think about it, we work, work, work, work, work to purchase things that we don't need, with money that we don't have to impress people that we don't like and in the end it just ends up in the garage.

Let's take a look at our main text today out of 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

⁶ Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. ¹¹ For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. ¹² Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

¹³ As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴ If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

¹⁷ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

We find here Paul addressing this topic for the third time in his two letters to the church.

We first saw it in 1 Thessalonians 2 where Paul sets the example of what it is to work .

1 Thessalonians 2:9

⁹ For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

Paul and companions / could have requested / Food and shelter / as payment

Paul and his companions could have requested food and shelter as payment for their work in setting up the church and teaching the congregants how to live as missionaries.

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Paul models work / problem in Greek culture

Paul rather demonstrates and models how they should live because he didn't want to become a burden to them, and he saw that this was a problem in Greek culture.

Paul worked with leather / tentmaker / bi-vocational

We know that the Apostle Paul worked with leather possibly as a tentmaker by trade. This is how he supported himself. He was bi-vocational in other words.

Again, Paul knew the Greek culture's view on work.

Manual labor / reserved for slaves / beneath them / Greek gods hated man / created work

They saw work as something that was reserved for the slaves. It was beneath them. The Greek culture thought that Greek gods hated man and so they created work for them to do.

More sophisticated / law, philosophy, art, politics

The Greek culture believed on the other hand that those who were more sophisticated should be studying the law, philosophy, art or politics. Physical labor was looked down upon.

Paul teaching the value of work as a Christian / Should view as honorable, noble

Paul was trying to teach them that this wasn't the case for Christians, however. Christians were to view work as one of the most honorable and noble things a Christian can do.

God established in Genesis 3:19 / Man would earn bread by sweat of brow

In the very beginning God established in Genesis 3:19 that man would earn their bread by the sweat of his brow.

After the fall God said that mankind is going to work to earn his sustenance.

Why does Paul regard work as noble / result of curse / not quite true

Now you might ask why work is a noble thing to do when work is the result of a curse from God. Well, that isn't quite true.

Work isn't the curse, but God cursed work.

Let's look back before the fall in

Genesis 2:8-9; 15

⁸ Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. ⁹ The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Work established before the fall / Pre fall vs post fall work

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We can see here that work was already established before the fall. Now pre fall work probably looked a lot different than it does in post fall work.

Pre fall = gardener / post fall = farmer

Some have tried to make the comparison that the pre fall man was a gardener where as the post fall man became a farmer.

As a result of fall / God cursed ground / made work more difficult

As a result of the fall God cursed the ground that man would work making the work more difficult.

Bible talks of those who are lazy

On the other hand, the bible also has a lot to say about those who are lazy.

Proverbs 10:4

⁴ Lazy hands make for poverty,...

Proverbs 13:4

⁴ A sluggard's appetite is never filled,...

Proverbs 20:4

⁴ Sluggards do not plow in season;
so at harvest time they look but find nothing.

Proverbs 21:25

²⁵ The craving of a sluggard will be the death of him,
because his hands refuse to work.

Proverbs 24:33-34

³³ A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—
³⁴ and poverty will come on you like a thief
and scarcity like an armed man.

We see other examples in scripture of how God views work in Genesis.

Genesis 2:2-3

2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

God created / 6-day work week / Genesis 2:3 / Blessed the 7th day

God created a six-day work week. It says in Genesis 2:3 that God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

Holy / set apart / different than other days / Lord ordained for rest / communion with Him

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This word holy means set apart, its different than the other days. This is the day that the Lord had ordained for us to rest and commune with Him.

Most of 10 commandments / straight forward / sense of guilt when break one / sabbath

Most of the 10 commandments seem pretty straight forward and we have a sense of guilt when breaking one. How many of us however work on the sabbath day and not think anything of it?

Exodus 20:8-11

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Is God calling me to work 6 days per week?

You might be thinking, "Is God calling me to be on the job site for six days out of each week?"

No / you know how it goes / 6th day

No, you all know how it goes: On the sixth day we are mowing the lawn and doing the laundry and cleaning the house and doing the shopping and running the errands, etc., etc.

All of this is work as well.

Not mean to be legalistic / Pharisees trying to pin Jesus down / healing on sabbath

It is also important to note that this isn't meant to be legalistic either. We saw the Pharisees trying to pin down Jesus on this one when he was healing people on the Sabbath.

Sabbath / Day set aside / rest, worship / God commanded /

The Sabbath is a day set aside for rest and worship. God commanded a Sabbath because we as human beings need to spend unhurried time in worship and rest each week. A God who is concerned enough to provide a day each week for us to rest is indeed wonderful.

Demonstrating regular time of rest and worship / Importance of God to us /

To observe a regular time of rest and worship in our fast-paced world demonstrates how important God is to us. It demonstrates that we are not God. Even God demonstrated the importance of a day of rest, reflection and observance of the Day of the Lord. This isn't something that we want to neglect.

Excuses of why people work all the time / We have all been caught in that at times /

I hear excuses all the time of why people choose to work, day after day without a day off and without observing the Lord's Day. I have been caught in that at times. The pressure to accomplish or get things done supersedes our obedience to Christ in observing the Sabbath.

What about when my job requires work on the Lord's Day?

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So what do I do when my job requires me to work on the Lord's Day? This can be a challenging thing.

Try if at all possible to have regular corporate worship on Lord's Day

The best thing we can all do is try, if possible, to worship with God's people on the Lord's Day.

If jobs prevent us / worth a convo with supervisor / At minimum / observe a sabbath day

If our jobs prevent us from being there it is worth a conversation with our supervisor to see if we can have that time slot off, move our schedules around or we have to be as creative as we can. At the minimum we should still observe a Sabbath day on a different day of the week.

Sometimes difficult to make work / pray about it / see how God can free up time

Sometimes it is difficult to make this work and the best thing we can do is pray about it and see what God does to free up our time to weekly observe a Sabbath day.

Tried asking for Sunday's off at my last job / Worked every Sunday / normal in church

I tried asking for Sunday's off at my last job. Can you believe they made me work every Sunday of the year? Apparently, that's a normal thing when you work at a church.

Why does Paul emphasize work? / Biblical issue?

So why does Paul make such a big deal about work? Is this really that big of a biblical issue?

Makes a big deal because / God designed mankind to work / it is a gift from God

Paul makes a big deal about it because God designed mankind to work, and it is a gift from God for man to work.

Let's breakdown our main text.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

⁶Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

Paul's directions / Not suggestions / instruction turns to a command

Paul's directions were not mere suggestions here when he has turned his instruction into more of a command.

Paul mentions this for first time to young church / 1 Thes. / Models this for church

I mentioned the first time Paul addresses this to the young church early on in 1 Thessalonians. He does so by demonstrating this to the church.

Later on in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 Paul gives more instruction on this when he says:

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1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

¹¹and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹²so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

Paul gets word / Church is still not complying after his example / brings the heat here

Now we see Paul getting word that church is still not complying with his example and his instruction and so he brings the heat in the section we are covering today and spends most of the chapter addressing it.

Paul says, "Now we command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Younger years of being disobedient to my mom / Threat of telling my dad

I remember my younger years of being disobedient to my mother. After several acts of disobedience my mom would say, "do you want me tell your dad how you are acting?"

That always got my attention!

"Now we command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

1. I have showed that you should work!
2. I have taught you that you should work!
3. Now I am commanding that you should work in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Paul gets the culture and knows its influence in the church / Makes it clear /

Paul is saying that in fact, he knows the Greek culture and that manual labor is beneath them. So let me make this clear, **"Don't even hang out with people who are not working!"**

Paul lays it down heavy in chapter 3 / Not getting it / He takes command

Paul is having to lay it on heavy to the church in chapter 3 because they simply are not getting it. He is taking command so to speak.

2 Thessalonians 3:4

⁴We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

⁶Now we **command** you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

2 Thessalonians 3:10

¹⁰For even when we were with you, we gave you this (NIV) rule (ESV "this **COMMAND**"): "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

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2 Thessalonians 3:12

¹²Such people we **command** and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat.

Paul's intervention / no longer casual or suggestive / weight & authority of judges order

Paul's intervention was no longer casual or suggestive in nature, but rather it carried the weight and authority of a judge's court order, which the apostle delivered and enforced.

It is here that Paul requires separation / Obedient Christians from habitual disobedient /

It is in the opening verse of this section that Paul requires separation so that obedient Christians were not to fellowship with habitually disobedient believers. We will see this carried out in even further detail in verse 14.

This seems harsh / Is Paul being unloving / What was the purpose of this?

Now it seems a little harsh when you read this. It seems quite unloving for Paul to call another Christian to keep away altogether from another idle believer. What is the purpose of this?

This word "idle" that we see here translates to a word meaning "disorderly."

We see Paul emphasize this back in his first letter to the church in

1 Thessalonians 5:14

¹⁴And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive (disorderly), encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

This disorder is defined as /

The disorder defined by the remainder of this section is **loafing, being remiss, negligent, lax, inattentive, thoughtless, inconsistent in the daily work and conduct,**

No excuse for this misconduct / Paul advocates for drastic discipline

There is no excuse that could justify such misconduct. Paul therefore advocates the drastic discipline of keeping away from the "idle."

Paul is putting a stake in the ground to define the character of a Christian through work.

This is not referring to people not able / no opportunity / Christians should help

What this is not referring to are people who are not able to work because of a physical limitation or a lack of opportunity. Paul is not speaking to those people here. In fact, Christians should be the first to help people in those situations.

If we look back in Ecclesiastes, we see the writer wrestle with the human dilemmas of work.

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The writer begins by asking these questions:

Ecclesiastes 1:3

³What do people gain from all their labors
at which they toil under the sun?

Ecclesiastes 2:22

²²What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun?

Ecclesiastes 3:9

⁹What do workers gain from their toil?

We begin to see the writer come to his own conclusions:

Ecclesiastes 2:11

¹¹Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done
and what I had toiled to achieve,
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;
nothing was gained under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 2:18

¹⁸I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me.

I do all this to supply my needs / I die / Someone else benefits

In other words, I do all this work to supply my needs and wants and then when I die someone else will benefit from the work that I do.

It was once said that no one has ever seen a hearse pulling a Uhaul!

Ecclesiastes 2:23

²³All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.

Finally we come to verse 8 in Chapter 4.

Ecclesiastes 4:8

⁸There was a man all alone;
he had neither son nor brother.
There was no end to his toil,
yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.
“For whom am I toiling,” he asked,
“and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?”
This too is meaningless—
a miserable business!

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The writer is no longer content with his riches / Time has passed / could have been spent in leisure

The writer has accumulated and accumulated and is no longer content with his riches. What he has realized is that time has passed him by that he can no longer get back and he could have spent that time in leisure living.

Work is getting in the way of his pleasure!

This brings us back to the question I set up in the beginning of the message.

What is your motive for working?

1. Is it to gain wealth and success?
2. Is it to finance a life of leisure?
3. Is it to supply the basic needs of life?

God gives us work as a gift.

Wait what? / Just read through Ecclesiastes / How is work a gift? /

Wait what? We just read through various verses in Ecclesiastes. How is work a gift from God? **For some of you, you may be thinking that your job got an extra dose of cursing!**

I am going to leave you hanging a little longer before we explore why work is a gift from God.

2 Thessalonians 3:7

⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you,

Paul reminds them of their example / they too were not idle

Paul reminds them of the example that him and companions modeled for the church. He retells that when he was with them, they too were not idle.

We remember Paul worked with leather / possibly as a tentmaker / not to burden

We remember that Paul worked with leather, possibly as a tentmaker so to not burden those he was staying with while training and equipping the church.

Paul reminded / He and companions were deserving of payment as missionaries /

Paul reminds them that he and his companions certainly were deserving of payment for the work that they were doing as missionaries **as it says in**

1 Timothy 5:17

¹⁷The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

Paul knew that this was an issue / Paul forwent payment / more beneficial to model

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But Paul knew that not working was an issue in the church. Paul forwent this because he knew that it would be far more beneficial to model what the Thessalonica church really needed.

Paul modeling qualifications of what it is to be an elder or pastor

You could say that Paul was modeling the qualifications of what it is to be an elder or pastor of this church.

Titus 1:6-9 ESV

⁶ if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷ For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

Paul going above and beyond / shepherding the flock / teaching what they are lacking

Paul is going above and beyond in a shepherd like way to walk with the flock in a manner that will teach them what they are lacking.

Does Paul deserve payment? / Absolutely / He wouldn't have been wrong

Does Paul deserve payment for what he is doing as a missionary? Absolutely! Paul wouldn't have been wrong for passing on work as a tentmaker to be fully devoted to his missionary responsibilities.

This principle may have been what inspired what he later wrote in Romans

This principle that Paul is modeling for the church may have also inspired what he later wrote in Romans several years later.

Romans 14:13-19

¹³ Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. ¹⁴ I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. ¹⁵ For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. ¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Paul is referring to food and drink / Principle is the same / not being bi-vocational /

Paul is referring to food and drink in the Romans example, but the principle is still the same. He knew that if he wasn't bi-vocational, it would do more harm to the church than help.

What things may God be calling you to forgo causing another to stumble?

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Think about what it might be for you? What things may God be calling you to forgo that is causing another brother to stumble?

In this case, the subject that Paul is referring to is work.

Your view of work carries a lot of weight as a Christian.

Think about it: If your colleagues know that you are a Christian and you constantly:

- complain about work
- gossip about the boss
- come in late
- leave early
- take an extended lunch
- loaf around on the clock, etc., etc.

What are your nonbelieving co-workers going to think about the God that you serve?

If Christians view work as a gift from God, we should be

- grateful for the work we have
- demonstrate respect and honor for the bosses we have
- come in early
- work during work hours
- be good stewards of our time
- be the best worker in whatever your job is that you can be

Greatest secrets of our day today / looking for a job / be the best /

This is probably one of the greatest secrets of our day today if you are looking for a job. Be the best worker you can be, show up on time, have integrity and do it as if it were a gift given to you rather than an entitlement...you won't have to apply for jobs anymore. Jobs will find you.

2 Thessalonians 3:8-9

⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. ⁹ It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.

You can probably imagine / culture shock / people gossiping about Paul / in it for /

You can probably imagine the culture shock when people outside the church were gossiping about Paul and his companions back in his first letter to the church that they were only in it for the money and fame and personal gain.

They toiled and labored, worked day and night, so that they were not a burden.

2 Thessalonians 3:10

¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

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Paul reinforced rule / denying food to the lazy / traditional form of discipline

Paul reinforced his example by this definite "rule." From a very early time denying food to the lazy was a traditional form of discipline in the church.

2 Thessalonians 3:11-12

¹¹ For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.

¹² Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

Not only were people not busy / busybodies / What are busybodies? /

Not only were people not busy at work but they were busybodies. What are busybodies? These were people who were interfering in the lives of others were trying to work. They were gossiping, slowing production, causing factions.

There are some who need jobs just because they are busybodies / need them to get away

There are some people who need to get jobs just so they will go away from us! They are busybodies interfering in the lives of those who are working.

2 Thessalonians 3:13-15

¹³ As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴ If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

Paul describes how to deal with loafers who disobey his instruction

Paul now describes specifically how the Thessalonian Christians should deal with loafers who disobey his instructions.

Keep on doing what is right / don't get caught in the drama Paul would say today /

Keep on doing what is right!...don't get caught up in the drama is what Paul would say to us today. **Keep being obedient to commands we have given you.**

Includes generosity to those in need / Doesn't include helping people refusing to work

This includes generosity to those who are in need. What this doesn't include is continuing to support those who have nothing because they refuse to work.

The Thessalonica church now must deal firmly with the mistakes of their fellow Christians.

Not to associate / those refusing to comply with the work ethic in letter /

They were not to associate with anyone refusing to comply with the work ethic set out in this letter, **so that they might be ashamed of their behavior.**

They weren't to kick offenders out of church / denied participation in feasts /

They weren't to kick these offenders out of the church but were denied participation in such things as the love feast and the Lord's Supper. **They were not to be given food because this would make the community appear to tolerate the offense.**

Point was to draw offender back into the fellowship

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The point of this was to draw the brother or sister back in to the fellowship through a form of discipline.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.

Paul closes out letter transitioning from command to exhortation

Paul closes out the letter transitioning from a command to an exhortation or encouragement and prayer.

Paul focuses on the "Lord of Peace" / knew this would be meaningful to reflect upon /

Paul focuses on the "Lord of Peace" as he knew this characteristic of God would be most meaningful to reflect upon in light of the intense spiritual battle that raged all around the Thessalonians.

Worship Team Back Up

2 Thessalonians 3:17-18

¹⁷ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the sign of genuineness in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Paul dictating through secretary up to verse 17 / see this in

Paul has been dictating his letter through a secretary up to verse 17. We see this in Romans 16:22; 1 Corinthians 16:21 and Colossians 4:18.

Paul takes the pen and closes with a greeting

At this point he takes the pen in his own hand to add a closing greeting.

Distinguishing mark in his letters / forgery and false letter on topics of 2nd coming

This is Paul's distinguishing mark in his letters so that the reader knows that it is written of him and not of someone forging false letters as had been going on around the topics of the second coming which confused the church.

As we close tonight / I want to answer the question of how work is a gift from God

So as we close I want to answer this question of why and how work is a gift from God in several examples.

1. Work is a gift from God because it is a means of glorifying God our creator by using the skills he gave us.

Mind

-When you work with your mind, and you achieve and accomplish with the skill of your thinking and intellect.

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Voice

-When you work with your voice to lead and stimulate and motivate to encourage or direct others.

Hands

-When you work with your hands to craft and design with skill, precision and accuracy through manual labor.

Strength

-When you use your strength to lift or move something heavy demonstrating the power and strength that the creator designed while also being able to delicately nurture a cut or a bruise on a child with gentleness and care.

When you do all these things it brings glory to the creator!

Flower / sunset / beauty / look at a man or woman / majesty and genius of God

If you think that a flower or a sunset is beautiful look at a man or a woman and see the majesty and genius of God.

2. Work is a gift from God because it is a means of providing value or meaning or fulfillment to life.

-The sense of accomplishing something.

Ever had to work on intricate project / many drafts and plans / drawings and thoughts /

-If you have ever had to work on an intricate project you probably had many drafts and plans and drawings and thoughts that needed repetitive edits in order to create the masterpiece in the end.

Whatever your craft is / career, hobby, sport / Given gift to refine

-Whatever your craft is, maybe your career or hobby or sport. The gift that was given to you had to be worked on over and over and over again until the masterpiece is finished.

-We are goal oriented people created by a goal oriented God.

3. Work is a gift from God because it prevents us from idleness.

Occupies us in meaningful tasks / protects us from idleness

-It occupies us in meaningful tasks rather than leaving us idle to do things which are harmful.

4. Work is a gift from God because it sanctifies us.

Work isn't work b/c we can play and relax / sometimes really hard / Sanctifies us /

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-I have spoken on this several times before but work isn't called work because we get to play and relax. It is called work because it is hard. Sometimes it is really hard. The means of work is what God uses to sanctify our character. It develops us in ways that teaches how to work with people who are hard to work with, how to overcome adversity, how to problem solve and how to serve someone else.

5. Work is a gift from God because it is a means of providing for the needs of life.

Use to be work / means of getting food / Today / means of getting money to get food

-It used to be that work was a means of getting the food. Today it is a means of getting the money that gets the food.

God has give us food, drink, shelter, clothing / Given us work as the means to get it

-God has given us food, drink, shelter and clothing and has given us work as the means of getting these things.

-Work is a noble thing by which we sustain the necessities of life.

6. Work is a gift from God because it is a means of serving mankind.

Individuals who contribute that allows us to have things in life

-The individuals who contribute the services to others that allow us to have the things that we do in life.

How many people does it take to make a pencil?

-You may have been asked before how many people does it take to make just one pencil? You may be surprised to hear that it takes millions of people to make just one pencil.

-From the logger who harvested the trees to make the pencil needed the tractor who took many people to build.

-The protective clothing that logger needed took many people to create it.

-The logging truck that transports the wood took many people to build, not to mention the fuels and oils that are manufactured for the truck.

-Now think of the equipment that was needed to pump the oil out of the ground.

Could go on and on about what it takes to produce one pencil / each plays a role

We could go on and on about the millions of people it takes just to produce one pencil. Each of us plays a role in our society through the means of work.

Message about obedience to Christ in work

Today's message has been about obedience to Christ in work as a means of glorifying our creator.

Without Christ / no motivation / no purpose / only can be done in vain

Without Christ there is no motivation, no purpose unless done in vain to work and work hard.

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We have a creator / loves you so much / wants you to be sanctified / to be like him

We have a creator that loves you so much and wants you to be sanctified and grow more and more to be like Christ.

Pain and toil in this world / one day be gone / those who have been redeemed

The pain and the toil that we find in in this world will one day be gone when we live with Christ forever for those who have been redeemed by him.

How is this done? How do I receive salvation from the Lord.

Well the work has already been done when Christ took the nails on the cross for you and I.

Has the Lord been softening your heart? / sensed him drawing you / gift of salvation

Maybe the Lord has been softening your heart and you have sensed him drawing you to receive the gift of salvation that he is offering to all who want it.

Romans 10:9 / declare with mouth Jesus is Lord / believe in heart that God raised him

The Bible says in Romans 10:9 that if you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead you will be saved.

May be thinking I am a good person / lived a good life / worthy of eternal life

You may be thinking that you are a good person and have lived a good life that is already worthy of eternal life in heaven once you depart from this world.

The scripture tells us in Romans 3:23 that we have all fallen short of the glory of God.

No one deserves this. God has given it because of his grace.

If God has been drawing you to him I ask you to make that commitment to him this very morning.

Pray for salvation

Home Group Questions

1. Why does Paul make a big deal about work?
2. For what reasons is work a gift from God?
3. How have you seen work sanctify you in your life?
4. How were you raised to view work?
5. What have been some examples over your years of working where you worked alongside people who were idle (lazy)? How did this impact the environment? Production? Etc.?

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