

**11-13-22**

**Sermon- Living an Undisciplined Life**

**Scripture- 2 Thess. 3: 6-15. CTW Isaiah 12**

**Hymns- 97, 233, 337**

**Theme- Today Paul continues in Second Thessalonians by reminding us that we should stay away from every brother or sister who is leading an undisciplined life. What is the "gold standard" for discipline? The root word of discipline is "Disciple", which means to be a student, "one who studies." So if that is the case, would you call yourself undisciplined when it comes to the things of God and His Son?**

Remember the television show called The Office. The Office was about employees of Dunder-Mifflin, a fictional paper company in Scranton, Pennsylvania. The show was called a **documentary**. There were unique times in the program when the characters looked into the camera and shared their thoughts and feelings about their job or co-workers.

The Office mocked issues like office politics, downsizing, inefficiency, sexual harassment, lame team-building exercises, and office romances. It's awkward, embarrassing, and occasionally inappropriate. Which is exactly why people liked it. It reminded them of how they really felt about work.

One of the points of the program is that for many people, work is absurd. They spend hours every day in a place they don't want to be, with people they don't like, doing a job they don't enjoy, for a paycheck that's never enough.

Of course, we can remember the Tennessee Ernie Ford song, "You load 16 tons, and what do you get, another day older and deeper in debt." Work sounds glamorous, doesn't it? Even the best job can lose its luster at times.

But, imagine heading to work each day with a sense of expectancy, instead of dread, and arriving home at the end of the day feeling satisfied. Imagine your work making you a better person instead of a bitter person.

Imagine it deepening your faith instead of undermining your faith. Imagine the work you do making a real difference in the world, and having an eternal impact on people's lives. Work, when properly understood and performed is good.

## **I. The Bible speaks about that kind of work from Genesis to Revelation.**

**A. Even the early church was dealing with some work-related issues. Paul addressed them in 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3. Let's look again at the key words of Paul for today:**

**Verse 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.**

**Verse 7** For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us.

**Verse 8** with toil and labor we worked night and day.

**Verse 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.

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

**Verse 13** As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

**Verse 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.**

**Verse 15... warn him as a brother.**

Paul makes it very clear . . . we are supposed to work on the things of the kingdom. He tells us that those who are idle, are lazy. They're a slacker, a wayward person.

In fact, Paul makes this even stronger when he said in verse 6 - -  
- WE COMMAND YOU! But Paul makes this command not on his authority but in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**B. You see, a lot of people expected Jesus to return at any moment. So, if Jesus was going to come back in the next couple of days or weeks, then why work?**

Well, they didn't really know when Jesus was returning. We're still waiting! Because they weren't working, they had lots of free time and they were becoming more and more of a drain on the church.

This was causing a number of issues in the church and Paul wanted to address this.

Paul reminded the people they're supposed to keep focused on the work of the kingdom... just as he was working. He was a tentmaker and could have requested money and support from the people, but he didn't.

Paul wanted the people to imitate his work ethic. Paul worked so that he could plant churches. He wasn't dependent upon others. He didn't want to take advantage of his hosts. He wanted to be a model so people would imitate him.

Without making a political statement, because this is not about that, work in the USA has been an issue. Since this pandemic started many people have lost jobs, some have stayed home

because they felt it was safer, some have stayed home because they were getting paid to stay home. There's lots of reasons.

A McDonald's in Medford, Oregon posted a banner outside their store...they're hiring 14-15 year olds. They couldn't get anyone to work for them. The owner said, the new employees are doing a great job! Glad to hear it. But that's what's going on in our world.

Maybe part of the reason for people not working is the fact that work is just a job. There's no passion, there's no hope, there's no sense of a future. There's no sense that in work, you're actually serving Christ.

We will always have those who are lazy with us. That didn't suddenly occur when covid did. It has always been here.

We know those people. We've worked with some of them. We know their tendencies. They take long lunches, work shorter hours, shuffle papers, make excuses, they believe they're overworked and under paid, and so on. Yet, they believe they are honoring God.

### **C. Let's go back and look at what Paul said in verse 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.

It's a command - if anyone is not willing to work, don't give him food. That's pretty brutal, isn't it?

The church had a great deal of sharing of their possessions. They shared their goods and food. So, if someone isn't bringing in a paycheck, not because they can't, but because they won't, Paul said, just don't feed them.

The hope is that when you're hungry, you may be willing to step it up a bit.

## **II. But here's the secondary issue that was going on. When you have lots of time on your hands, what might you do?**

Paul calls them out in the verse 11

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

It's a play on words. Some who are idle are busybodies. A better translation comes from the NKJV - - - -

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

**A. You see, you can be idle and be quiet and not be the source of issues.** You just sit like a lump. But that wasn't happening. The word used for idleness is better translated as **UNRULY, UNDISCIPLINED, or DISORDERLY**.

In other words, the people who were not working, who were idle and lazy, were acting in a disorderly and unruly manner. That spells it out more. They weren't just idle, they were disruptive to the people in the community **who were working!**

AND they were **busybodies**. This is the only time this word is used in the Bible. Literally it means - - to bustle about uselessly, to busy oneself about trifling, needless, useless matters.

So, Paul is telling us these people are acting in an unruly and undisciplined manner as they meddle in other people's business, which is totally useless and needless.

**B. Paul's pretty tough on these idle folks. He tells the church to:**

Keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and have nothing to do with him, **that he may be ashamed. OUCH!**

That sounds pretty harsh. Remember, Paul is talking about those **within the church**. This is not for those outside of the church, just for believers who are idle.

At the same time, Paul also reminded the people that this person is still a "brother" and is to be redeemed. We are to help those who choose to be idle. We are to encourage them to get back to work. To find satisfaction in working.

**C. We work, because God has gifted us to do some pretty amazing things with our gifts and talents. We use them for His glory.**

We are to be faithful to Jesus and faithful to the church, because we represent both Jesus and His church. We have the opportunity to glorify Jesus with our work.

Paul reminds the Thessalonians in verse 13: As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

**Don't get tired of doing good.** Don't get tired of doing what's right in the name of Jesus. Paul is reminding us that by working, by caring for ourselves and our family, by supporting the work of the church, we are doing good.

**III. Sometimes, if we're to be honest, it can be very draining to do good to those who are draining you. Sometimes you want to walk away, not invest time in them.**

**A. Yet, Paul wants us to take a deep breath and not get tired. How do we do that? We trust in God's power and presence.**

Maybe it's very simply praying for that person. Maybe it's giving encouragement. It's not rocket science, but it's not something we always want to do.

**The most basic first step is to commit to praying for that person in a positive manner.**

When we do what's right, what's good, we're encouraged and even though it may not always be easy to do, we're doing something, even though we may not realize it, we are part of a much larger work that God's doing — in and through us, in the church, in the city, in the nation, in the world. We're doing good as we honor and glorify God.

**B. Paul reminds us in Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.**

**That really becomes our marching orders.** Whatever you do . . . whether you're at work, at home, a volunteer, wherever you are . . . DO EVERYTHING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.

Sometimes that's a struggle. Sometimes as I said at the beginning, we're not happy with work, we're not happy with whatever we're doing, yet the goal is to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**Think about it, when you're not happy with your boss, can you still honor that person, even pray for them?**

When things aren't great at home, can you still do everything in the name of Jesus, which has to change things?

When you have to do some volunteer work you don't want to do, honor Jesus.

Whatever you do, wherever you are, do what you were called to do. Don't give it a half-hearted effort. Give it everything! Do it for the One who gave His life for you.

Do whatever you're doing as if Jesus were standing next to you, or sitting next to you. **Picture Him with you**, maybe that starts to change things.

**C. Here are some words to live by in this situation:**

if you're praised - do your job.

If you're ignored - do your job.

If you're yelled at - do your job.

**The point is no matter what's happening, do what you were called to do by doing it all in the name of Jesus.**

Know that your work matters to God and that you show who Christ is through your commitment to your work. Do it at home, do it at work, live it wherever you go!

Today's the day to commit yourself and your work to God.

**If we are men and women who desperately want to be faithful to God, we can help others see who Christ is in us.**

We should resolve to live lives where we will hear those great words from Jesus . . . **Well done my good and faithful servant! Be that servant!**

Amen? Let us Pray...