

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 11TH - 12TH, 2021 // BOOK OF 2 THESSALONIANS

ENDURING (2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-5)

"PRAY FOR US"

Paul moves on from eschatology to simple instructions for daily living. He begins with a humble request for prayer as he ministers.

- Prayer is never something we mature out of. We need to talk to Jesus daily while also lifting others up to God. **Prayer is essential because it agrees with Christ and results in a divine appointment with God.**

PRAYING FOR SPECIFIC THINGS

Paul wanted the church to pray that the gospel spreads and that it is "honored" (lived out) everywhere like it is by the Thessalonian congregation. He also asks that they pray for protection from "evil people."

- **Casual conversations with God are fine, but we must also intentionally seek His guidance and protection.**

PEOPLE CAN BE AWFUL, BUT JESUS NEVER IS

Paul is referring to persecution in this passage. Though there are rude, selfish, and evil people in this world, God is still good and faithful, and He will protect us from the "evil one" prevailing against us.

- **Though we will suffer hardships and even martyrdom, God gives us internal stability and spiritual protection.**

STABILITY, IF WE CHOOSE IT

V4 says, "We have confidence...that you are doing and will continue to do what we command." Meaning that we can only live in the stability of Jesus if we follow Him daily.

- **Christianity is an engaged faith with an interacting Lord. Jesus will help us, but we must obey Him (Jn. 14:15), and He will give us strength to obey (Phil. 2:13).**

LOVE AND ENDURANCE

Paul wanted the Thessalonians to have a deep relationship with Jesus so they could live in and understand His love more. **If we truly have a deep love for God, then we will also miraculously have "Christ's endurance" to push through hard times.**

- **The love of God starts with a desire for the truth, prayer, and obedience.**

IRRESPONSIBLE (2 THESSALONIANS 3:6-13)

STAYING AWAY FROM IDLENESS

Paul gives a command to "keep away from every brother or sister who is idle and does not live according to the tradition received from us."

- This was an exercise in church discipline to produce shame that would lead to repentance (1Cor. 5:5,11). **The turning away would expose their heart by repentance or display prideful indifference.**

THE OFFENSE WAS IDLENESS (LAZINESS)

Many people were not only lazy but also expected others to provide for their needs even though they were capable of supporting themselves. The problem was deliberate negligence of their own responsibilities.

- Paul makes it clear that **laziness and entitlement were not the examples set by the Word**, he, or his team (v7-8).

THIS IS AN EPIDEMIC IN OUR SOCIETY

Not only are we commanded to not be lazy or entitled, we're also told to not steal (7th C) and to not be envious of what our neighbor owns (9th and 10th C's).

- Hold these commands up to the envy, greed, corruption, apathy, laziness, and entitlement of our country. **How are we, as Christians, doing with this?**

BECAUSE WE ARE TO NOT BE A BURDEN

The Bible sets the principle of responsible independence; **that capable Christians are to be generous, not dependent on the generosity of others.**

- **Because we should know better through the Word and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, we are to be examples of responsibility and generosity.**

THE MOST NEGLECTED PRINCIPLE IN SCRIPTURE?

V10 is a biblical command that states, **"If anyone isn't willing to work, he should not eat,"** but we often neglect this principle and enable bad behavior that keeps people in a state that God deems unacceptable.

- This is talking about people who profess to be Christians. **Lazy "Christians" do not contribute to a good reputation of God.**

"NOT BUSY BUT BUSYBODIES"

Because people were not working and contributing out of laziness and entitlement, they had extra time to meddle in others' affairs and not tend to their own problems.

- The old saying, "Those who row the boat don't have time to rock it," is true. **Have we not seen the negative effects of people with too much idle time?**

SO, WHAT DO WE DO WITH THIS?

Jesus tells us to feed the poor, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoner (Mt. 25), so we know that benevolence is in God's heart. We also know that through the Spirit and the Word that we are not only called to a higher standard but empowered to live it out.

- **We must teach the gospel, use wisdom, make disciples, and err on the side of grace.**

IT IS NOT EASY TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT

Paul tells us to **"not grow weary in doing good"** because he knows the endurance it takes to love people.

- It is not easy to love people without enabling bad behavior or growing jaded from consistent attitudes of entitlement or laziness. This is why **we must pray for wisdom and God's love.**

ASSOCIATIONS (2 THESSALONIANS 3:14-18)

"TAKE NOTE" AND "DON'T ASSOCIATE"

Going back to church discipline, Paul says to not only take note of people who knowingly do not obey scripture but to not associate with them.

- It seems like the heart behind this is to instruct us **to stay away from rebellious people that claim Jesus because it tarnishes the integrity of the church.**

"WARN HIM AS A BROTHER"

We are to discipline Christians who disobey the Word as "brothers" and do all we can to leave a road for them to return to the body.

- Again, none of this is easy. **We are to be honest and loving as we call out sin and hold each other accountable in the hopes that backsliders will see the error of their ways.**

THE KEY IS ALWAYS HUMILITY

When people rebel against scripture and are disciplined because of it, the hope is humility and repentance. **We must also be humble with people because we all have fallen short.**

- **The key to salvation is our humility in front of God. The key to a healthy church is our humility towards each other.**

YES, IT'S ME

Paul made sure to say that this was written by his own hand because of the counterfeit letters the church had received.

- It is another subtle reminder to make sure that **the Bible is our primary source of theological information** and that **any other "gospel" is false and dangerous** (Gal. 1:8-9).

GRACE AND PEACE

Paul covered a lot in a short letter. Though he has high expectations and gives stern instructions and warnings, Paul loves the church.

- **Grace** is the unmerited favor of God. **Peace** comes from our relationship with God. **Jesus is the vessel by which we're able to fellowship with God and live in grace and peace.**

ENDURANCE THROUGH LOVE

- We will only be able to endure the hardships of life and the challenges of our society/culture if we love God above all else.
- We must remember that true Christianity is an active and engaged faith with a present, active, loving, and all-knowing God. **Pray, read, listen, obey.**

CALLED TO BE RESPONSIBLE

- Christians are called to live at a higher standard, not because we are loved more, but because we have the knowledge of righteousness and the calling to illuminate the Good News to others.
- **If we are physically and mentally able, we are to work hard, be responsible, not be a burden, and be generous.**

ALSO CALLED TO BE PROACTIVE

- We are to be about our Father's business of **making disciples** by teaching the gospel and walking out life with others. **This is impossible if we are lazy, selfish, or reactive in how we live.**
- We must proactively seek God and be obedient to the clear objectives of His Word if we are to be a good witness.

LIVING OUT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

- How is our endurance? Are we producing spiritual fruit? **Do we think our struggles have to do with our proximity to Jesus?**
- Are we loving people in a way that pulls them up rather than enabling poor choices, entitlement, apathy, laziness, or envy?
- Are we proactively seeking and loving God and others? **Is our faith intentional?**