

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18 – A Parting Word

I. Review of 2 Thessalonians 1-2

- A. 2 Thess 1:1-12 – Paul gives thanks for the Thessalonians and encourages their perseverance by assuring them of God’s coming perfect justice for His people and against unrepentant unbelief.
- B. 2 Thess 2:1-12 – Paul corrects errors regarding of the Second Coming and the coming “man of lawlessness”, assuring ultimately unrepentant unbelievers of their judgment in the final victory of Christ.
- C. 2 Thess 2:13-3:5 – Paul rejoices that God has ‘consecrated’ the Thessalonians to live for Him and he trusts that their godly living will cause the preaching of the gospel to “speed ahead and be honored”.

“...and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you...” (1 Thess 4:11)

“And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted...” (1 Thess 5:14)

II. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18 – The Offensive Love of God

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. (2 Thess 3:6-18)

1. According to Paul, what are the two reasons he gives for why the Thessalonians should not be “idle”?

*“...many Puritans preferred that the churches take care of the poor in their own parishes, where they could judge between genuine and fraudulent need.” - Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were*, 181.*

2. How would you define laziness or idleness? How can we distinguish between laziness and restfulness? Does v. 11 help?
3. What is Paul's response for such a situation in the church? Is this as extreme as the case of 1 Cor 5:1-13? What does this teach us about an important function of the church?
4. What is the love (yes, love!) in vv. 14-15 protecting as most-valuable in the church? What is a love without such consequences protecting as most-valuable?

"God's love creates and affirms us, but it does so for the purposes of winning praise to himself. The holiness or God-centeredness of God's love offends us because it brings both salvation and judgment. Church membership and discipline therefore offend us because they picture both salvation and judgment, and draw a line between them."
- Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love*, 77.

27-4. *The power which Christ has given the Church is for building up, and not for destruction. It is to be exercised as under a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath. As in the preaching of the Word the wicked are doctrinally separated from the good, so by discipline the Church authoritatively separates between the holy and the profane. In this it acts the part of a tender mother, correcting her children for their good, that every one of them may be presented faultless in the day of the Lord Jesus. Discipline is systematic training under the authority of God's*

Scripture. No communing or non-communing member of the Church should be allowed to stray from the Scripture's discipline. Therefore, teaching elders must:

a. instruct the officers in discipline,

b. instruct the congregation in discipline,

c. jointly practice it in the context of the congregation and church courts.

5. Why do you think Paul followed this discussion with his encouragement in verse What are some ways that Christians can "grow weary of doing good" in the church?

"We must take heed that some men's unworthiness causes us not to be slack in well-doing." - Geneva Bible

"Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing." (1Pe 3:9 ESV)

"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking...so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.. (1 Pet 4:1-2)

“...Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.” (Heb 9:27)