

## 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18; “Paul’s Final Exhortations” July 30, 2023

### I. Welcome & Review

#### A. Good morning! Ohaiyogozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni.

1. It’s great to be here with you all. I pray that as we gather in this place that we do so with hearts that are in tune with the Lord and focused upon what He would have for us today.
2. I know many of you have been working a lot on getting us ready for VBS and I am so grateful to the Lord for you. But I hope we’ll be able to set all the VBS prep and last minute things that need to get done aside and just enjoy getting into the word together this morning. I trust He has a special word for each of us.

#### 3. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.*

#### B. Some of you may have noticed that Pastor Nick is back. He and his lovely bride Je arrived on Tuesday night and they will be here in Iwakuni for the next couple of months, wrapping up things here and heading back to the ministry God has called them to in California.

1. I hope you will take the time to say hello and introduce yourself to Je after service.
2. Also, be in prayer as we are looking to bring another family out to Iwakuni to join us in the ministry in lieu of Pastor Nick. Cannon Byrd and his family are putting together paperwork for visas and we hope to have them here in October, prior to Pastor Nick and Je returning to CA.
3. We are confident that God will provide for the needs of the church and that He will be faithful to call laborers into His field of ministry here in Iwakuni. God has a plan, of this we are sure. So be in prayer.

C. Well, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School class at this time.

1. As well as the bible English class (Second Service)

D. For the rest of us, we are going to look to wrap up our study of the book of 2 Thessalonians this morning by covering the third and final chapter.

1. If you recall, Paul wrote this letter for three primary reasons.

a. One, was to encourage the church. The church was facing all sorts of persecution and opposition and so Paul wanted to encourage them in their newfound faith.

i. This encouragement is throughout, but primarily seen in chapter 1.

b. Two, Paul wrote to explain a few things in more detail regarding the coming of the Lord and "the Day of the Lord"; a time of God's wrath and judgment.

i. The church had some people falsely claiming that they were living in "the Day of the Lord" and so Paul wrote to refute those claims and to explain how the church could be certain they were not, in fact, living in, nor were they experiencing, "the Day of the Lord".

ii. The persecution they were experiencing was not God's wrath, but rather the attacks of the enemy, the evil one.

iii. So Paul wrote to clarify and explain these things to the church in chapter 2 of this letter.

c. And then three, Paul wrote to exhort the church and some of the members that were behaving disorderly. And that is what we are going to cover today in our study of chapter 3.

2. So the three main reasons Paul wrote had to do with encouragement, explanation, and exhortation.

E. Our text this morning is going to be the entirety of chapter 3 dealing with Paul's final exhortations to the church. For those of you who like to take notes and outline our text that will be our title for our study this morning; "**Paul's Final Exhortations**"

1. If you haven't done so already, I'd like to invite you all to open your Bible, make your way to 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 and then once you are there, I'd like to ask you to rise to your feet in honor of the Lord and His Holy Word.
2. I'm going to read through our text from my Bible, do your best to follow along in your own Bible.
3. Paul wraps up his second letter to the church in Thessalonica with the following in verse 1 of chapter 3... (R & P)

## II. Outline

A. This morning we're going to be dividing our text up into four sections as we cover Paul's Final Exhortations to the church in Thessalonica.

1. In each section will note a few different things that Paul was directing to the church in Thessalonica and see how it applies to us today.

B. Our first section is found in verses 1 & 2 and it involves "**Paul's Call**". Take a look at our opening verses once again with me.

## III. 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2; Paul's Call – Two Things

A. Now, some of you may recall how at the end of chapter 2, Paul offered up a prayer for the church in Thessalonica.

1. He prayed "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our god and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work" (**2 Th. 2:16-17**)

- B. And here in the opening of chapter 3, Paul calls upon the church in Thessalonica to pray for him and his ministry partners.
1. Paul knew and understood the importance of prayer, the need for prayer and the power that comes through prayer.
  2. Paul was never too big or too proud to ask for prayer. He often requested in his letters that the churches pray for him.
    - a. He did so here in his writing to the Thessalonians. He did so with the church in Ephesus, the church in Rome, the church in Corinth, the church in Philippi, and the church in Colossae.
    - b. Paul planted nearly all these churches, and they were filled with a bunch of new believers, people still trying to figure out what it meant to be a Christian and what it meant to pray to the one true God. But that didn't keep him from asking them to pray for him and the work God was doing in and through him.
    - c. Even though he was a leader of these churches, he knew and understood the need for them to be praying for him.
  3. And if Paul the apostle, the man God hand-selected on the road to Damascus; the man God used to work all sorts of signs and wonders including healing the lame, casting out demons, and raising the dead; the man God used to pen nearly half of the books of the NT; if this man felt the need for prayer, how much more should we feel that same need?
  4. We need to be praying for one another. We need to humble ourselves and let down our guard enough so that we can be vulnerable and let people know what we need prayer for.
  5. There is power in prayer. There is power released as we lift up our needs and the needs of those around us.

As we worship the Lord and acknowledge His hand at work in us, and in the lives of those we intercede for, power is released from on high.

6. I would ask that you would be praying for me on a regular basis. God knows, and I know, I need it. Pray that I may lead this flock well, that I may faithfully present God's word and love and feed and care for you all well. I can't do it without your prayers and support.

C. Well, Paul called upon the church in Thessalonica to pray for him and He asked specifically for two things in his prayer, note them with me.

1. First of all, Paul asked the church to pray that **God's Word would go forth freely**. That it would spread rapidly. And that it would be glorified and honored amongst those that hear it.

- a. That is the meaning here when Paul asks for the word of the Lord to run swiftly and be glorified. Paul wanted to see God's Word move forward without any hinderance. He wanted to see God's Word honored and glorified in the lives of those who heard it.
- b. This is what had happened there in Thessalonica. God's word went forth in great power through Paul and his companions and it did an incredible work in and through the people there.
- c. Paul knew there was power in God's word; power to change people's lives. Power to save people.
  - i. Paul said that the gospel message he preached was the power of God to salvation. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God according to Romans 10:17 (**Ro. 10:17**)
- d. Paul knew the promises that were in God's Word. He knew what Isaiah had to say about God's Word.
  - i. How it would not return to God void, but that it would accomplish what God pleased and it would

proser in the thing for which God sent it. [Isa. 55:11]

e. He wanted to see God's Word go out without any hindrance whatsoever, to spread across the lives of people everywhere. That God and His Word would be glorified in our lives.

2. The second thing Paul asked them **to pray for was deliverance**. Deliverance from unreasonable and wicked men who did not have faith.

a. These prayers are connected. For as the gospel goes out, there are those who will want to stand in the way of the gospel, enemies of the gospel; those who are unreasonable and wicked in their ways.

b. They will not listen to God's word, they cannot be reasoned with and they will oppose God's Word any chance they get.

c. I'm sure you've come across people like this before. They don't want to have anything to do with the Bible and will oppose the spread of God's Word and make claims against God's Word saying it has contradictions in it, that it can't be trusted, that it fosters hate, that it is outdated, and all sorts of other false claims.

d. Paul was facing some people like this while in the city of Corinth. People who were actively trying to oppose the spread of God's Word. And so, he asks the church in Thessalonica to pray that they would be delivered from these kinds of people.

D. As we consider Paul's call for prayer from the Thessalonians in relation to God's Word going forth in power and without hindrance, I think the application for us is quite simple.

1. That we too would pray similarly. We need to be praying for God's word to go forth in power. That it would spread rapidly and be honored and glorified

among the people who hear it. That those who have received it will in turn share it with others that God's Word would continue to go forth and impact people for all eternity.

2. So pray for me as I share God's word, but also look for opportunities to share God's Word yourself. Be bold. Share God's Word with those around you, share God's gospel message and watch God's power go forth and change lives all to the glory of God.

E. Well, I said we would divide our text into four sections. The first section dealt with Paul's call to prayer. The next section deals with "**Paul's Confidence**" in verses 3-5. Read them with me.

#### IV. 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5; Paul's Confidence – Three Things

A. Here in these three verses, we see that Paul follows up his call to prayer with three things that He is confident of.

B. Number 1, Paul is confident **in God's faithfulness**.

1. While Paul and his companions may encounter people who are unreasonable, wicked, and faithless. He has the utmost confidence in God and His faithfulness.
2. God is faithful!!! You and I...are not so faithful. We can't be counted upon. Even though we may try our hardest to be, in and of ourselves we will always fall short.
3. But God never will. He is forever faithful. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (**Heb. 13:8**)
4. We can count on Him to always be there. To always see us through even the most difficult of circumstances. No matter what comes our way God will be faithful to not only get us through it, but to use it for His glory and our growth and maturity in Him.
5. Even when we are faithless, and we blow it. God will still remain faithful. His faithfulness is not based upon

our faithfulness. It is based upon His character, who He is.

a. The scriptures tell us this very truth. In 2 Timothy 2 Paul writes, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” (**2 Tim. 2:13**)

6. So Paul was confident in God’s faithfulness. But we see here in our text that he was confident of God’s faithfulness to do two things.

a. Paul was confident that God would be faithful to establish the church in Thessalonica. The word established is the same Greek word we looked at last week, the word “sterizo” where we get our English word steroids from.

i. The idea here is that Paul was confident God would strengthen this church. That’s how a lot of the more modern translations put it, that God will strengthen them.

ii. The power needed to do that which God calls us to is provided by God Himself. He is faithful to empower us for the things that He calls us to. God will never call you into something that He won’t also empower you to do. He is faithful that way.

b. Paul was also confident that God would be faithful to guard them from the evil one. This is a reference to Satan himself.

i. You see, Satan roams around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour according to 1 Peter. (**1 Pt. 5:8**)

ii. In Ephesians Paul exhorts the church to put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (**Eph. 6:11**)

- We’ll be learning more about that this week during VBS.



- iii. Later in that same chapter Paul describes how the wicked one Satan shoots his fiery darts at us trying to take us down and how we need the shield of faith to quench those fiery darts he hurls at us (**Eph. 6:16**)
- iv. Though Satan comes against us, we need not fear for God will be faithful to guard us against the attacks of the enemy.
- v. Now, this doesn't mean we won't ever experience trials or difficulties, or persecution. The devil and his minions will seek to oppress us and come against us, but they will never triumph over us.
- vi. Satan fights a losing battle. The victory has already been won through Christ. He defeated the devil and grants to us the victory that He won upon Calvary.
- vii. Paul was confident that God would be faithful to protect and guard these believers from the enemy.

C. Back to our text, I said that Paul was confident of three things. The first was God's faithfulness. The second thing was **God's work in them**.

- 1. Paul was confident in the Lord concerning the church in Thessalonica and their ability to do and to keep on doing all the things that Paul and his companions had commanded of them.
- 2. This is so important that we note this, church family. Paul was not placing his confidence in them, but rather he was placing his confidence in God to enable them to do, and to keep on doing, the things He commanded them to do through Paul and his companions.
  - a. Philippians tells us "it is God who works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure." (**Phil. 2:13**)
  - b. God is the one doing the work in us. It is His will that we do these things and as the old catchphrase

goes, “When it’s God’s will, it’s God’s bill”. God will provide. He will be the one that does the work.

- c. And He will continue to do that work in us until the day He calls us home to be with Him forever.
- d. Paul tells us again in Philippians that we can be “confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in us will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;” (**Phil. 1:6**)
- e. Paul was confident in the present work of God in the church in Thessalonica and he was confident in the future work of God in and through the church in Thessalonica.
- f. And God will complete the work He began in us as well. We can have the same confidence Paul had towards those in Thessalonica for our own lives.

D. The third thing Paul was confident in was **God’s ability to direct their hearts**. In His ability to lead them.

- 1. Paul knew God would lead them and direct their hearts into two things.
- 2. First of all, Paul was confident in God’s ability to lead them into His love.
  - a. This is that “agape” love of God. The unconditional, limitless love of God. This is the kind of love we need. And God is able to lead and direct our hearts into this kind of love.
  - b. And oh, how desperately we need this kind of love, for the Lord and for one another. We need God’s love to be working in our hearts and lives more and more.
  - c. For without it we are nothing. Without it all that we do is nothing more than a waste of time. Without God’s love leading and guiding our hearts all our efforts, all our religious efforts, all our good deeds,

they amount to nothing if they are not done in God's love.

- d. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing." (**1 Co. 13:1-3**)
  - e. Without God's love leading the way all we do is nothing more than sounding brass and clanging cymbals; it amounts to nothing and it profits me nothing.
  - f. We have to have this kind of love. And God is the One who will give us this kind of love. He is the one who demonstrated this kind of love for us in sending His son to die on the cross for us.
  - g. And because He loves us, we in turn can love others with His love. The scriptures attest "We love, because He first loved us" (**1 Jn. 4:19**)
  - h. So Paul was confident in God's ability to lead their hearts in love.
3. And the second thing Paul was confident God would be able to lead their hearts into was the patience of Christ.
- a. The word patience is an important one to understand here. It is the word "hupomone" [hoop-o-mo-nay]. And it specifically deals with the ability to bear up under and to endure things and circumstances.
  - b. There is a different Greek word that is used to speak about the ability to have endurance towards people,

its usually translated “long-suffering”. God is long-suffering towards us. But that isn’t the word being used here. This is speaking about the ability not to endure people, but to endure situations and circumstances.

- c. To have patience, “hupomone” as it is written in the Greek, refers to, and I quote, “the quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial” (Zodhiates)
- d. Jesus demonstrated His patience when He went to the cross for us and He did not give up, He did not surrender to the cries of His flesh, but He endured the pain and shame of the cross. Jesus could have came down from the cross at any moment, He could have spoken a word and it would have all been done and over with. But He did not succumb under trial. He persevered. He patiently endured.
- e. Hebrews tells us that it was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross, despising the shame, and now has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (**Heb 12:2**)
- f. We, you and I, were part of the joy that was set before Him; knowing that His victory would pave a way for us to be reconciled to the Lord, and made righteous before the Lord. He did it for us.
- g. And Paul was confident that God would be able to lead our hearts into that kind of patience. The ability not to give up under trials and hardships.
- h. The church in Thessalonica was going through a lot of persecution. But Paul was confident that they would not give up, they would not succumb to the trials. He was confident that God would lead them into the patience of Christ. That He would lead them into the ability to endure hardship and not give for the joy that is set before us; eternity with the Lord in heaven.

i. Where all our pains and sorrows and trials will be wiped away. And we will behold the beauty and splendor of our Lord and majesty. What a glorious day that will be.

4. So Paul was confident in God's ability to lead their hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. And we can be confident of that same work in us.

a. God will lead and guide us and our hearts as well, if we want Him to, if we trust Him to.

b. Proverbs 3:5 & 6 reads, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." (**Pro. 3:5-6**)

c. God will lead us into His love and into the patience of Christ as we submit our ways to Him and trust His Word and His will for our lives.

E. Let's take a look at our next section dealing with "**Paul's Commands**" in verses 6 through 15. Here Paul brings up the main portion of his exhortations for the chapter.

1. As we go through this section, we'll note four different commands Paul had for the church and note them bit by bit. To start off take a look at verse 6 (*after reading verse 6, jump down to verses 14-15*).

V. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Paul's Commands – Four Things

A. Vs. 6, 14-15

1. First off, Paul commands those in the church to **withdraw themselves** from those who are being disorderly. Now there is a process to this withdrawing and Paul further details it in verses 14 & 15.

2. This command pertains to those who are brothers (or sisters) in the faith, we would simply say believers as opposed to unbelievers.

3. Also we are talking about believers who walk disorderly.
  - a. The word walk is important to note.
    - i. It's used figuratively here to refer to the way in which a person lives their life. It refers to the way in which one regulates their life.
    - ii. We're not talking about someone who slips up and/or has a sudden lapse in judgment and stumbles into sin, but rather someone who has made it a point to live their life a certain way.
  - b. And that way or manner is described as disorderly here by Paul. This word too, is important to note.
    - i. The word is more commonly associated with the military. It is a word used to describe soldiers who are out of rank or who are deviating from the prescribed order or code.
    - ii. In this context it is referring to those who are acting contrary to the tradition (or doctrine) which was sent via Paul and his companions. And specifically its talking about those who are not working and providing for themselves.
4. You see, Paul had already addressed this issue prior to this writing when he wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians.
  - a. He wrote, "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly..." (**1 Thes. 5:14a**)
  - b. That word "unruly" is the Greek adjective form of the adverb that's translated as disorderly in our text.
  - c. He also exhorted them to aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind their own business, and to work with their own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly..." (**1 Thes. 4:11-12a**)

- d. And so not only had Paul already written to them about this. This was also something that he had commanded them when he was with them in person.
5. And so we see a pattern here, of how things have progressed. Paul first shared the command, the expectation for how they were to live a certain way, to walk a certain way. And he did this when he was with them in the city of Thessalonica.
- a. Later on, when he got word that some were not following his command, he wrote to the church and encouraged them first to warn those who were being unruly.
  - b. Here it is a few months later and he gets word that there are still the same issues and so he now raises the stakes.
  - c. In verse 14 he speaks of those who will not obey Paul's word in this epistle and commands the others to note them and not keep company with them.
  - d. And so there was first a command given, a clear statement of the expected behavior. Then there was a warning given in Paul's first letter. And then another exhortation and warning given here in his second letter. And if they don't listen after the second warning, then the church is then to withdraw from that person, and not keep company with them.
    - i. This coincides with what Paul writes to Titus about those who are divisive. He said to reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition," (**Titus 3:10**)
6. And so, the church was to withdraw from and not keep company with, or mingle with is the idea here, those who continued to act this way after they had been warned twice about their behavior being disorderly.
- a. You see, in this context, as we'll note later in our study, the main culprits were those who were not

working and were living off the generosity and support of the rest of the church.

- b. Not only were they not working, but with all their free time, they were meddling in the affairs and lives of the rest of those in the church. They were being busybodies. Running around getting all up into everyone else's business, but not doing anything for themselves.
  - c. The remedy against a busybody and a gossip is to not give them an audience in the first place. If they can't busy themselves with the affairs of everyone else, eventually the hope would be that they get bored of not doing anything and start to become a more productive member of the society.
  - d. And so Paul commands the church to not give these people an audience, to withdraw from them and not to keep company with them.
7. And it's also important to note the purpose behind this disassociation with the brother or sister in Christ. It was so that they would feel ashamed of their actions and turn from them.
- a. The heart behind any sort of discipline should always be reconciliation and restoration.
  - b. We are not to count them as if they were an enemy, or an unbeliever. They are still our brother or sister in Christ and we are still called to love them as such.
    - i. God loves us and part of His love for us comes in the form of discipline.
    - ii. Hebrews reads, "My son, do not despise the chastening [or discipline] of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." (**Heb. 12:5b-6**)
  - c. You see, loving someone in a godly manner means sometimes having to admonish them, to lovingly



correct them and tell them that their behavior needs to change and that if it doesn't then you're simply not going to be able to continue keeping company with them.

- d. This is often hard to do. Where is that line between loving people, serving them, being a blessing to them AND hindering people, and enabling them to continue in sin? It can be hard to determine, and I believe that is a matter between you and the Lord.
- e. We need to let the Spirit of God within us lead us and guide us in those matters. There will come a time when our helping people, really isn't helping them any longer and it is merely enabling them to continue acting in a disorderly manner.
- f. And when that time comes, we must be faithful to follow Paul's command here to cut them off basically and admonish them towards repentance. That they would get right with the Lord.

8. Back to our text, take a look at Paul's next command in verses 7-9.

#### B. Vs. 7-9

1. Here Paul commands the church in Thessalonica **to follow the example** that he and his companions had left for them.
2. When Paul, Silas, and Timothy were there in Thessalonica they did not act disorderly, they did not eat anyone's bread free of charge; they weren't mooching off others. They worked diligently providing for themselves that they may not be a burden to any of them.
3. Now interestingly enough, as apostles and ministers of the gospel there was a certain expectation that they would receive from the church for their services.

- a. As apostles, they had the authority to expect the support from the church. But Paul chose not to exercise that authority while in Thessalonica.
- b. This wasn't something Paul always did. He did receive support at different times, from different churches, but for the sake of the Thessalonians he decided against it.
- c. I imagine that Paul probably noticed a certain mindset and simply read the environment there in Thessalonica, allowing God's Spirit to lead him in whether or not to look for support.
- d. And based upon his desire to be an example to those in Thessalonica, he felt the need for him and his companions not to receive any support from them and instead to work and provide for their own means.
- e. Maybe it was something he noticed while in Thessalonica. Perhaps there wasn't a very strong work ethic displayed amongst the people, and so Paul felt the need to live his life as an example of how to work hard and earn his fair keep.
  - i. The Greeks during that day despised manual labor. They thought it was work that was meant for slaves alone and they would try to get out of it as much as possible.
  - ii. The Jews on the other hand thought that everyone should be trained in at least one particular trade or craft so that no matter what happened in life, they'd always have a skill or trait that could be useful towards earning a living.
  - iii. As a Hebrew, Paul had been trained as a tentmaker and he used his skill to help support himself and the ministry from time to time.
  - iv. Seeing as how Thessalonica was a major Greek city, it would make sense for Paul to use his life as

an example of demonstrating the value of a hard day's work.

4. Paul was willing to sacrifice his authority as an apostle to serve as a better example to those in Thessalonica. So that He can say to them, "Follow me, as I follow Christ".

a. *"Follow my example that I left for you. Work hard, don't mooch off of other people. Be a blessing, not a burden."*

5. Hopefully we live our lives in such a way that we can echo Paul's exhortation here. That we can look to others and say, *"Hey, follow me, as I follow Christ. Look at my example of how I live my life and pattern your own life after it."*

6. The truth of the matter is that whether you like it or not, people are watching and they are learning from the example you are leaving behind.

a. Mom, Dad, sister, brother, Marine, Sailor, what kind of example are you leaving behind for others to follow in?

b. Is it one that will lead others to Christ? I hope and pray so.

c. But if not, I would hope that you would repent and start living a life that is worthy of the gospel and worthy of the name of Christ, that you wouldn't be ashamed when others follow in your footsteps.

7. Well, let's continue on. Paul has a two more commands for us to note here in this section. Take a look at verses 10-12 where Paul gives a command to those who are being disorderly.

C.Vs. 10-12

1. Here Paul gives **a command towards those who were being negligent** in their responsibilities and

duties as a believer and a member of the church and the greater society.

- a. Now, it would seem, that perhaps there were some in the church who took Paul's teaching on the imminent return of Christ and thought to themselves, *"Well, if Christ is coming back at any time, why should I worry about the future, why should I kill myself working every day and providing for my future if Christ is coming back so soon. Then all my labor and efforts will have been for not.."*
  - b. And so, they quit their jobs and started just living off the generosity and support of the other church members. Not only that, but with all their free time, they started meddling in the affairs of everyone else.
  - c. There is a play on words here in verse 11. When Paul mentions how they didn't work at all, but were busybodies. The Greek basically accuses them of doing everything everywhere, while at the same time doing nothing. They were really busy at doing nothing. Nothing profitable or edifying at least.
2. Paul commanded the Thessalonians while he was with them, "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat."
- a. It's important that we note what Paul said here. He did not say "If anyone cannot work", but "if anyone will not work".
  - b. Paul is not referring to people who are incapable of work. Those who perhaps were crippled, or blind, or handicapped in some other sort of way that prevented them from being able to work. Paul was speaking to people who would not work, though they had the capability to do so. It was not a matter of ability, but more so a willingness.
  - c. Those who are not willing to work, shall not eat. Paul made it very clear that if someone was capable of

work then they ought to work and provide for their own selves.

d. He commanded here in this letter that those who were acting in this disorderly fashion and not heeding his example that they were to work in quietness and eat their own bread. Basically Paul was telling them, *“Get off your rear end and go get a job. Stop taking advantage of the kindness and generosity of the church.”*

3. We’ve got one more command that Paul gives and its found in verse 13. Take a look at it with me.

D.Vs. 13.

1. Real simple here. Paul’s final exhortation was for those who were doing well, who were doing good. He encouraged and exhorted them **not to grow weary in doing good.**

a. It can be wearisome to work hard, do the right thing, and see others sitting around doing nothing, or others who aren’t pulling their fair share, and causing us to pull a little more for others.

b. This can be especially wearisome when we don’t see the immediate impact and benefit that comes from the fruit of our labor.

c. When we don’t see the results, we were hoping for right away, we can begin to get weary and wonder if it is really worth it at all. And the danger is that we throw in the towel and give up prior to experiencing the rewards and fruits of our labors.

d. Paul shared a similar exhortation to those in Galatia. He wrote, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (**Gal. 6:9-10**)

2. This is my hope and prayer for so many of you. I know that you are stretched thin, that you are pulled in a thousand different directions at times and serving in the church, whether that's in our children's ministry, our sound booth, our nursery, or our hospitality team, the worship team really any and all of the areas can be difficult.
3. It can be so tempting to just throw in the towel here at church and feel like it simply isn't worth it. Don't give up. Don't lose heart. Don't grow weary. You will eventually reap a harvest. You'll see the fruit of your efforts.
4. It may not be next week, (but for some of you it will be as we get to see the joy and excitement upon the kids faces as we love on them this week during VBS), it may not be this week, or next week, or next month, or next year.
5. In fact, some of us won't see the fruit and rewards from our service until we stand before the Lord in heaven. But I guarantee you, when you are standing there before the Lord, receiving your rewards from heaven, you won't regret your service to the Lord, in fact, the only regret you may have is that you weren't able to do more.
6. So be encouraged church family. Don't give up, don't grow weary in doing good. God sees your efforts, He sees your labors for Him, and He will reward you in due season, at just the right time.

E. Well, let's look at our final section for us this morning as we turn to **Paul's Closing** in verses 16-18.

VI. 2 Thessalonians 3:16-18; Paul's Closing – Three Things

A. As Paul closes out his letter he signs off with his own hand, which was a sign in every epistle he wrote, a way in which they could test whether a letter was from him or not.

B. And he lifts them to the Lord and specifically mentions three attributes of God he desired for them. Note them quickly with me.

1. Number one, Paul wanted them to have **the peace of God**.

- a. Paul prayed that the Lord of peace Himself would give them peace always in every way.
- b. No matter what heartaches and situations they encounter, no matter what sort of persecutions and trials that came against them, Paul wanted them all to have the peace of God.
- c. This peace of God is the kind of peace that surpasses all understanding and guards our hearts and minds from the attacks of the enemy, from the despair that can come as we fight the good fight of faith. (**Phil. 4:7**)
- d. This is the kind of peace Jesus gives to us. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (**Jn. 14:27**)
- e. Jesus gives to us the kind of peace that is able to overcome a troubled and fearful mind. He doesn't give as the world gives. But He gives in abundance, He satisfies our needs, and continually supplies us all of our days.
- f. In fact, not only has Jesus given us His peace. He Himself is our peace according to Ephesians 2:14. (**Eph. 2:14a**)
- g. And so may we find, and know, and have, the peace of God in our hearts and minds through an intimate relationship with Christ. Spend time with your Savior in prayer and worship. And allow His peace to be yours.

2. Number two, Paul wanted them to have **the presence of God**.
  - a. Paul prayed that the Lord would be with them all. Even those who were being unruly and disorderly. Paul's desire is that all of them would know and understand that the Lord was with them.
  - b. God's presence is always with us. He never leaves us nor forsakes us. (**Heb. 13:5b**)
  - c. But I think Paul's prayer here is that the Thessalonians would be mindful of His presence with them. That they would know and sense that He is with them as they go through various persecutions, as they deal with these church issues, as they continue to spread the gospel and as they continue to serve God faithfully, that they would know and sense God's presence with them.
3. And number three, Paul wanted them to have **the grace of God**.
  - a. Paul, as he often does, began and ended his letter with grace. And I like that. For our faith is founded upon the grace of God and it is sustained by the grace of God and it will be accomplished and completed by the grace of God.
  - b. It's all about God's grace. How will these Thessalonians be able to do all these things Paul laid out for them, these final exhortations? By the grace of God.
  - c. And the same is true for us. We will only be able to do what God has called us to do, by the grace of God working in us and through us.
  - d. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen? Amen. Let's pray.