

## We'll Work Till Jesus Comes 2 Thessalonians 3

### **Slide 1**

A pastor was leaving his church and was saying farewell to his congregation at the church doors for the last time.

He shook the hand of an elderly lady as she walked out. She said, *"Your successor won't be as good as you."* "Nonsense", said the pastor, in a flattered tone.

*"No, really,"* said the old lady. *"I've been here under five different ministers, and each new one has been worse than the last."*

Today is the final message of this series on old hymns. Last week, we looked at *When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder*.

It was about heaven; who'll make it there and what it takes to make it there. This week, we look at our last old hymn, *We'll Work till Jesus Comes*.

This hymn was originally published in 1829, with the author listed as "Anonymous." However, since then the song has been attributed to Mrs. Elizabeth Mills.

We don't know what inspired her to write this hymn, perhaps it was John 9:4, *"As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work."*

Or, it could have been Galatians 6:9, *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."*

Regardless, in the past three weeks, essentially we have seen how God is love, God is great, and God is coming back.

Today, through this hymn, we have the message that we need to continue to work and spread the Word of God.

## **Slide 2**

*2 Thessalonians 3:1-5, "As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance."*

In this passage, Paul lays out two prayer requests before he gets into the main focus of his letter.

First, before Paul asked for anything or talked about anything else, he asked for the Thessalonian Christians to pray for him and his workers as they worked to spread the Gospel.

Paul specifically asks for them to pray that the Gospel "*may spread rapidly and be honored,*" meaning that the Gospel would have unhindered progress as he and his helpers began to tell others about the love of Christ.

Now, Paul wrote both 1st and 2nd Thessalonians while he was in Corinth on his second missionary journey.

So, while Paul was on the front lines fighting the good fight and spreading the Gospel, he wrote back to the Thessalonian church asking for prayer.

Prayer that this news they had about Jesus Christ, the One Who died on a cross to save them, wouldn't face opposition as they tried to spread it.

The second prayer request that Paul included was for the church to pray for their protection and deliverance from those who were evil and wicked.

He was asking for the Thessalonians to pray that those on this missionary journey would be protected and delivered from those that were trying to hinder them from sharing the Gospel.

You have to understand that, when Paul wrote this letter, he had not been in Corinth for very long.

He was in the progress of starting a church, so you can imagine that he was facing a ton of opposition at this point from the people of Corinth.

Why would there be opposition? Keep in mind what the main religion of Greece was at that time. They worshipped false gods like Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, and the list goes on and on.

I can only imagine what some of the people said to him as he preached the Gospel.

Can you imagine going to a country where everyone believes the same exact thing and you're trying to tell them about Christ?

This is why Paul was asking for prayer for protection as they preached, evangelized, and as they shared the Gospel.

This goes to show that even if we're not on the front lines of ministry, we need to be praying for those that are.

We need to be praying for the very things that Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for... that the Gospel be spread with unhindered progress and for protection of the people who're serving on the front lines.

20 years ago, there were two places where it was almost guaranteed that there wouldn't be a shooting. That was church and school.

In today's age, it's the complete opposite. Churches and schools are the most targeted. We need prayers for protection from wicked and evil people as we serve on the front lines of ministry.

Serving on the front lines isn't easy. There're times when it becomes difficult and challenging. Paul told the Thessalonians that God would guard them from the evil one meaning the devil.

That means the devil would be attacking them in spiritual warfare since the devil always attacks those who're proclaiming the name of Christ.

Remember, the Bible doesn't say **if** the devil attacks, it says **when** he attacks. There'll always be opposition to the Gospel.

There was opposition in the time of Jesus, there's opposition now, and there'll be opposition to it in the future.

Paul needed protection from this opposition, and we need this same protection and prayers for protection as well.

### **Slide 3**

Paul then encourages the Thessalonians to keep going and to keep working, just like it's imperative that we all work for the Lord.

In 2 Thessalonians 3, there are four things that we must do as we serve the Lord. It's like the hymn we sang earlier, *We'll Work Till Jesus Comes*.

2 Thessalonians 3:6, *"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us."*

Here, Paul instructed the Thessalonians to stay away from those who were idle. This word “*idle*” can be defined as “*Avoiding work; lazy.*”

Why would Paul have to warn the Thessalonians Christians about this? It was because many of them had stopped working since they believed that the second coming of Christ was close at hand.

They believed they were in the End Times, so they didn’t see a need to work if Jesus were about to come back and take them home.

Therefore, instead of working and providing for both, themselves and their families, they depended on others to provide for them.

How many Christians have stopped working today because they either believe the end is near, or because they believe that their time here on Earth is almost over?

Paul was talking about working their secular jobs to make money and provide for the family, but I’m talking about our spiritual jobs. Our jobs within the church. Our jobs as Christians.

The Bible tells us repeatedly to go and make God’s name known to all the corners of the Earth.

Not one time in the Bible does it command us to wait for the lost to come to us, but it’s filled with commands for us to go to them.

I can’t tell you how many times I’ve heard the phrase, “*Well I’m pretty old now. It’s time for me to pass the torch.*”

I hate to tell you this, there’s no retirement from serving God. We’re called to work. There’s no age in life that, when you get to it, you can say your time of serving God is over.

Moses served God until the day he died. David served God until the day he died. Paul served God until the day he died. Listen to this next one... Jesus served God, here on Earth, until the very moment He died on that cross.

If the Son of God saw the need to serve until death, then so should we. That's why Paul tells us to stay away from those who're idle. Those who're avoiding work. This includes those who are spiritually lazy and are avoiding work.

It's important because often the attitude of those who're spiritually lazy and avoid work will rub off on those who're on the front lines of battle in the ministry.

Don't let someone who's doing nothing for the Army of God put out your fire for making His name known. Look at the lyrics for *We'll Work till Jesus Comes*:

*O land of rest, for thee I sigh!  
When will the moment come  
When I shall lay my armor by  
And dwell in peace at home?*

*To Jesus Christ I fled for rest;  
He bade me cease to roam,  
And lean for comfort on His breast  
Till He conduct me home.*

*We'll work till Jesus comes,  
And we'll be gathered home.*

In each verse, the author talks about how she longs for rest, and in Jesus she'll have that rest, but then look at the chorus.

*We will work until Jesus comes.* I'm old; I've been doing this for a while, but I'll work until Jesus comes. If we all have that attitude and mindset, this church and this country would be completely different.

#### **Slide 4**

2 Thessalonians 3:7, *“For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you.”*

In verse 6, Paul tells them to stay away from those who're avoiding work and are lazy, here he's telling them to be like him.

He's telling the Thessalonians to imitate him and how he was when he was with them during his missionary journey.

This goes for us as well. We, as Christians, should be imitating God and Jesus. When Jesus was here on Earth, He worked. Look at some of the things He did while He was here:

He healed the sick  
He gave sight to the blind  
He cared for the poor  
He never turned away children  
He washed feet

Jesus continued to serve. Think about that for a minute. The King of Kings. The Son of the Living God even washed feet.

Ephesians 5:1-2, *“Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”*

We're told to be imitators of Christ. Christ served and so should we. Jesus never told someone else to do it. Jesus never “passed the torch.” Jesus never made-up excuses as to why He couldn't do it. Jesus just served and made God's name known.

When you serve in ministry, it'll always be tempting to quit. It's always tempting to stop and let someone else do it. There'll be times when you just want to give in and give up.

Don't wait for someone else to do it. Don't "pass the torch." Don't make up excuses as to why you can't do it. Just serve and make God's name known.

### **Slide 5**

*2 Thessalonians 3:8-9, "Nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate."*

Paul came to the city with the sole purpose of ministering to the people of that city and while he was there, he also worked to be able to take care of himself instead of relying on others.

The ministry cost him. It cost him time, money, and energy, but to Paul it was worth it. When you're working for the Lord, it'll cost you something.

It'll cost you time that you could spend doing anything else. Sometimes, it'll cost you money; money you could spend on yourself or your family.

It'll cost you energy. Energy you could use to get other things done. When you're working for the Lord, it'll cost you something, but let me tell you, it's always worth it.

During Vacation Bible School, serving is costly. Many who serve spend countless hours preparing for that five-day event where we get to minister to children.



Those serving that week spend hours in lesson planning, teaching, and leading children in their classes.

Yes, Vacation Bible School is costly, but it's worth every hour spent planning, it's worth every headache, and it's worth every penny spent.

*2 Corinthians 5:15, "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."*

Jesus died for us so we would live for Him. Living for Christ includes serving no matter the cost. It includes working through the price.

Jesus continued to serve the Father even when it was costing Him His life on that cross. He didn't die for us to sit back and do nothing, but He died for us to go out and live for Him.

We should faithfully serve God no matter the price.

### **Slide 6**

*2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, "For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat."*

Again, Paul gives the Thessalonian church a warning about those who're idle. Earlier we defined idle as: *"Avoiding work; lazy."*

He says to stay away from those who are lazy and avoid work. He emphasizes this because not only can their laziness rub off on you, so can their attitude. Their attitude of refusing to serve.

Often, those who're idle in their faith want others to be idle as well. They begin to discourage others.

We must continue to serve and work for God even when people are telling us to quit or are saying mean and hurtful things to us or about us.

Also, you're never too young to serve in the church. 1 Timothy 4:12, *"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."*

You're never too young to serve in the church; you're never too young to serve God. Despite what many believe and say, when God has told you to do something, He has already factored in your age.

There's no age requirement for doing what God's called you to do. If God has told you to do something, you do it even if the entire church tells you that you're too young.

I'd rather serve with someone who's 10 years old and on fire for God than I would with someone who's 100 years old and is idle in their faith.

If there was an age requirement or an age restriction for serving God, it'd be in the Bible.

## **Slide 7**

### Conclusion

John 15:18-19, *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."*

The world hates Christians because we stand against the things of the world. It hates us because it hates Christ and because it hates Christ, it'll make noise when you try to do the work of Christ.

Even if everyone is telling you not to do it, follow what God's telling you to do. When the church tells you that you're not old enough, follow what God's calling you to do. You don't answer to others, but we all answer to God.

Last week we looked at how one day everyone will stand before God and give an account for everything that we have ever done or said here on Earth whether it be good or bad. That includes whether you followed what He called you to do or not.

As we close this morning, I want you to ask yourself what's God calling you to do. Where's He calling you to serve? Will you have the courage to step into that role and serve God until either He returns, or He calls you home.

Throughout the year, we have areas where we need people to step up and serve.

People who'll work through the tiredness. People who'll work through the temptations to quit. People who'll work through the price, and work through the noise.

We must work till Jesus comes.