

A Church Full of Idles

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[illegible]

Good. Hey, a little energy tonight. Good to see you. Good to see you. And some of you came back from this afternoon and others were glad you're here. If you've got a Bible, go to 2 Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians, right after 1 Thessalonians. I went to seminary for that kind of stuff. So anyways, 2 Thessalonians chapter 3.

If you're new with us, this series this summer has really been about trying to figure out a healthy, spiritually balanced life. Like we know how important it is to be balanced in a lot of different areas of life, but certainly that's the case spiritually as well.

And there's these things in Scripture that seem to be exact opposites. And yet the Scripture is calling us to hold them in tension, to be good in tension, which is the title of this series.

[1:45] We've looked at things, for example, like we spend so much time with people, like you work with people, you go to church with people, you hang out with friends, and we can get really out of balance.

Because at the same time, we need to be spending time with God in solitude. And sometimes that time with people and time with God is out of balance. Everybody with me? And then we looked at prayer and obedience.

Like sometimes we think, well, I pray, and now I'm just going to leave it for God to answer. And yet what we actually fail to understand is oftentimes God answers His prayer through our obedience.

And we looked at, for example, the Lord's Prayer and that word us, give us this day our daily bread. It's not give me my daily bread. Why is that?

Because I'm, yes, I'm asking for bread, but I'm also used of God to be the answer to someone else's prayer as I'm aware of the needs of others around me.

[2:47] And so prayer and obedience are something that we hold in tension. Last week, and this was one of my favorites, I don't usually say this, but if you missed last week, I encourage you to go and listen to last week.

And that's feasting and fasting, going periods of time without food so that that hunger reminds us of what's already true.

And that's our constant dependence on God. Amen? That like if you go very long without food, you're going to realize I need food really bad. In fact, I'm not going to live without food.

And that fasting reminds you how dependent you are on God. God. And then you eat and you're reminded of His goodness in your life. But then that's also balanced with feasting.

There should be times in your life where you intentionally, not just like, yay, I want to go to the Chinese buffet. It's like, no, it's not that. It's God has poured out His grace in my life in such a way that I'm going to plan an intentional moment with family or friends.

[3:51] And we're going to eat really good food and we're going to celebrate the grace of God. We're going to celebrate His blessings. And so that's what this series has been about.

How do we get to that place of balance where we're not to one side or the other? Now, we're going to talk about one this evening that is really, really important in Scripture.

And we'll show you that in Scripture. In fact, here in Thessalonians, Paul is actually writing to a church that he sees as out of balance in this area.

They've tilted to one side than the other, and he calls them out on that. He's trying to bring them back to a place of balance, and it's in the area of work and rest.

Yay, work and rest. So, I'm just going to tell you, this is not a very politically correct passage in American culture, but it is the Word of God.

[4:49] Amen? So, let's read it together. I'll invite you, if you're able to stand, to please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word. So, 2 Thessalonians 3, look at what Paul writes here under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Now, we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who's walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you receive from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it. But with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we may not be a burden to any of you.

It was not because we didn't have the right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. And even when we were with you, we would give you this command, if anyone's not willing to work, let him not eat.

For we hear that some among you are walking in idleness, not busy at work, but busy bodies. Now, such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

[6:00] As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. If anyone does not obey what we've said in this letter, take note of that person. Have nothing to do with him that he might be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for this time together this evening, the things that you want to teach us in your word. This is one more area that I think if we're honest, we don't always get in proper balance.

And so come and talk to us tonight. You know what each and every one of us needs to hear. And so just come by your spirit and talk to us through your word. We love you, Lord, and thankful for this time.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. You can be seated. A few years ago, there was a story out of Spain that's like almost too unbelievable to be true. Evidently, there was this symbol engineer by the name of Joaquin Garcia who worked for the city water department in Katy, Spain.

Now, I've heard of Katy's Kentucky, but not Katy's Spain. Anyways, Joaquin began working at the water department in 1990. In 1990, he would like oversee the water treatment facility and the water, city water's infrastructure.

[7:17] He'd been employed with the company for more than 20 years. And every two weeks, Joaquin would receive his paycheck. It was directly deposited into his bank account.

So one day, the company decided, we want to recognize Joaquin for all of his years of service and all of his hard work for the company. And they were going to present him with this achievement award in his honor.

But as they were preparing for the ceremony and to present him with this award, something was discovered. What they discovered was that while he'd been receiving his paycheck every two weeks, while his paperwork had been filed always on time, there was one really big problem. He hadn't shown up to work in over six years. I know. Evidently, Joaquin just decided one day he didn't want to work for the company anymore.

He got tired of all the politics. And so he just decided he wouldn't show up. And he didn't tell anybody. And what's even crazier than that is that one department thought the other department was overseeing him.

[8:35] And that department thought the other department was overseeing him. And nobody noticed for six years. For six years. And so month after month, year after year, Joaquin kept getting his paycheck while never actually working.

Now, needless to say, he didn't get the achievement award, right? Well, what he got was a lot of fines and in some pretty big trouble.

Now, as crazy as that story may be, let's be honest. Be honest. When I shared it, there was a little bit in you that was jealous, right?

There was a little bit in you that was jealous. Like, you may not actually try to trick your company out of getting a paycheck, but most of us, come on, most of us would jump at the opportunity to receive a paycheck without actually having to go to work.

Come on, right? Amen. Amen. There was a business conference in Orlando some time ago with all these different business leaders that were there for the event.

[9:44] They brought in all these motivational speakers to talk. Some of the speakers on that conference were Tony Robbins was there. Colin Powell was there. Maybe one of the greatest motivational speakers in the history of the universe, Dick Vitale, right?

I mean, does anybody inspire you more than Dick Vitale? And so during the conference, during the conference, one of the speakers asked this question, they said, and I quote, if you went home tonight and found that a relative, had died and left you \$10 million, would you show up to work the next day?

And the audience almost knocked down the walls, screaming so loud, no. No way would I show up at work tomorrow if I had received \$10 million.

How would you answer that question? I mean, don't get me wrong, Faith Family. I love you. I love you a lot, but \$10 million plants a lot of churches in Hawaii.

I'm just saying. I'm just saying, right? Anybody want to go with me? Anybody want to go with me? Just saying. It's not a real picture, by the way.

[11:01] Whatever. Right. So, come on. Most of us would say the same. And maybe you're so spiritual or whatever that you wouldn't be like, no, I'd show up at work tomorrow.

Can we at least acknowledge that most people in our culture would say no? Most would not show up. And that's because when we think about the ideal situation, the perfect scenario, we tend to think of something like this.

Shade. I didn't know we had a pool.

Perfect scenario is like having somebody wait on you, hand and foot, all day long. Like we imagine, like what's your ideal scenario?

It's like going to the perfect beach and just sitting there at the beach and relaxing. Or maybe the perfect retirement. Like getting to the point in your life where you don't have to do anything else.

[12:16] Or maybe for you, it's like just getting to the weekend where I'm finally done with work. Like these are the things that we tend to describe as heaven.

If we could just somehow be free from work, then life would be great. And I mean, you know, is this not the mindset that's reflected in our culture? This means yes, right?

It absolutely is. And if you don't believe me, just take a listen to the lyrics of a lot of the songs that you hear. I was about to start line dancing on that one, right?

But think about the message of those songs. Think about the, I mean, you know many of those songs, right? Sinners. Like you like could quote the lyrics.

And what the message that's behind that is things like, well, I work nine to five while I dream of a better life. Or I don't want to work.

[13:21] What I want to do is play or bang on the drums all day. I'll work, but what I'm really working for is the weekend. Because that's when, Alan Jackson said, you have a good time.

That's exactly right. At least a few country fans, right? You see what I'm saying. The way we tend to think, our mindset in this culture is that the ideal life is the life that's free from work.

Is everybody with me? As I said last week, nothing, nothing could be further from the biblical mindset. Like that is the exact opposite of the way the Bible speaks about work.

In fact, who is the very first worker? God. Exactly. Adam's next, all right? So you were close. God is. God's the very first. Like page one of your Bible, how does it start? In the beginning, God created. God worked. God took a world that was formless and void, and He brought beauty and design into it.

[14:30] And God said that it was good. And then what did God do next? We're still page one of your Bible. Look, God said, let us make mankind or human beings in our image after our likeness.

And let them have dominion. He gave them a job to do over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

God created human beings, mankind, in His own image. In the image of God, He created them male and female. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and do what?

Subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. That is, God, this is really, really important.

In fact, I would argue if you don't have this background, you're not going to understand why Paul addresses the issue the way that he does. God, the very first worker, creates human beings in His image to do what?

[15 : 35] Work. To do work. To have a job to do. In fact, jump to Genesis chapter 2 and look at verse 5. When no bush of the field was yet in the land, and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work.

That's a problem. There was no one to work the ground. And then verse 15. The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to do what? To work it and keep it.

In other words, at the very, listen, the very core of what it means to be a human being is work. I didn't think I'd get an amen on, right?

Right? But it's true. What it means to be an image bearer of God is to work. And God brought beauty and structure and order into a chaotic world, and then He sent human beings out as His image bearers to do the same thing for His glory.

I can summarize all of this in one phrase, and it's this. Work is worship. Work is worship. Now, think about the last three weeks that I summarized at the very beginning.

[16 : 50] If I said something to you like about solitude with God or spending time with God, you would see that as a spiritual thing, as an act of worship, right?

Second week, if I talk to you about prayer, we look at the Lord's Prayer. Almost everybody here would see prayer as an act of worship. Or last week, about fasting.

You would see fasting as a part of worship. In fact, in Acts 13, they were praying and worshipping and fasting. In other words, we don't have any problem seeing those things as acts of worship.

But the thing is, you need to see work the same way. Your thinking is imbalanced if you see prayer as worship, but you don't see your job as worship.

Because in the very beginning, human beings were created in the image of God to work. And that is exactly why Paul rebukes this Thessalonian church.

[17 : 59] Is that there is a real imbalance that's taking place. And it's a spiritual issue. It's a spiritual issue as I've just outlined. And it's such a big deal that the Apostle Paul feels like he needs to address it in the life of this church.

This church has become full of idols. And I don't mean I-D-O-L-S. I'm from Tennessee, so I have to be careful when it comes to spelling.

Short words. Not I-D-O-L-S, but I-D-L-E-S. They've become idol. Verse 6. Look at verse 6.

Now, we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who's walking in idleness, and not according with the tradition that you receive from us. Now look at verse 11. For we hear that some among you are walking in idleness, not busy at work, but busy bodies.

[19 : 01] So evidently there were people in this congregation who were belittling or minimizing or even ignoring their responsibility to work.

And this is not the first time that the Apostle Paul has had to address this issue in their life. If you go back to the first letter that he wrote to the Thessalonian church in 1 Thessalonians 4, look at verse 11.

Aspire to live quietly and to mind your own business, right? To work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and dependent on no one.

And now look at chapter 5. This is still 1 Thessalonians, verse 14. We urge you, brothers, admonish the... So is this a problem in the Thessalonian church?

You better believe it is. Two letters, three times, he's had to address this issue. And if you're a parent, you know exactly what this is like.

[20:06] It's like a parent saying, don't make me have to tell you again. Right? Get to work. Get to work. I have to continually address this issue with you, and that's a problem.

Now, let me stop for just a moment and tell you what Paul does not mean, because it's really important. Some of you, I'm afraid, are going to like misunderstand what Paul is saying, and maybe what I'm saying as a result of this message.

So let's break this down. First of all, idleness is not rest. Everybody say amen. Idleness is not rest. Paul is not rebuking naps.

Thank the Lord, right? Whatever a nap is. He's not rebuking naps. Rest is a godly thing. After all, let's go back to Genesis for just a moment.

What happens right after God, the first worker, worked? You remember what happens in the seventh day, chapter 2, verse 2. And on the seventh day, God finished His work that He had done, and He did what?

[21:12] He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.

So, in other words, preach, preacher. When it comes to rest and work, God was good intention. He had the proper balance of He did the work that He wanted to do, and He rested.

He works, and He rests. And as you know, like many of you know this, what does God do when He calls the nation of Israel? He, like, designs their entire weekly schedule to image what He did in creation, right?

As Israel would work six days, and then they would have sabbat. They would have the Sabbath, where they were to rest from their work. You remember in Matthew chapter 11, Jesus invites those that are weary and heavy laden to come and find what?

Rest. Rest. God is pro-rest. And He rested, and He wants you to rest. Now, the reason why I'm spending more time on work is because, number one, that's the issue of imbalance in the Thessalonian church.

[22:33] And another reason why is because I've actually preached several different messages here on rest. Rest. And so if you want, like, more study on what the Bible has to say about rest, then I'm happy to direct you to those.

Here's the point I'm making. To have a healthy spiritual life, you have to learn to balance work and rest. Work and rest. Is that you do work, and you also have a time where you rest from your work. Paul knows this. Is everybody right? Everybody with me? That's not what he's rebuking. He's not rebuking people that are taking real, genuine rest.

Here's the second thing he's not doing. He's not talking retirement. Necessarily. Right? He's not talking retirement. Listen, this may be newsflash to some of you.

You do realize that retirement does not mean idleness. In fact, some of you are busier now that you have retired. Right? That's not, in other words, retirement's not the issue.

[23:41] How you spend your retirement is the issue. You could spend your retirement watching, well, I'd say Bob Barker, but I don't think Bob Barker's been on in a while. But you could spend your retirement just watching Netflix all day, or you could spend your retirement actively involved in important responsibilities like family, community, ministry.

In fact, if anything, when you retire, you should have more time to do ministry in the church, to serve other people, to do things that are good for your neighbor and for your family.

Amen? Retirement does not mean the absence of work. It just means you're no longer working the way you used to work anymore. Does everybody with? Paul's not rebuking that.

Thirdly, and this is very important because it's going to get a little harsh and a little awkward in a few minutes. And you need to keep this in the background of your mind so that you realize this is not what Paul or I am saying.

Is idleness is not a real inability to work. Does everybody understand that? Yes, okay. Paul is not talking about somebody who's unemployed but trying to find work.

[24:59] He is not talking about somebody who's physically unable to work. In fact, the opposite, the text says, if a man is not willing to work.

There are people who are very willing but just not physically able. Amen? And Paul would have enormous grace for that. He's not rebuking that.

He's addressing people that could be working, should be working, but are not. In other words, they're a bunch of cousinetties. They're a bunch of cousinetties.

They're just holding out for management positions for years and years and years at a time. Now, if we're honest, and I hope that we would be about this, we have an entire culture, an entire generation of cousinetties.

Right? And this is where it's going to get weird, but I don't care. It's God's Word, right? Not mine. We want the government to take care of us. We want our parents to just wait on us, hand and foot, covering all of our needs till we're 45 years old while we play video games and take naps.

[26 : 10] Okay? I'm not against playing video games. I'm not going to embarrass my son, but maybe I will, right? My son loves to play video games, but you know what he also does? He has a job, and he works hard at school.

So the issue isn't video games. The issue isn't having the thing that you like to do that's relaxing. It's that all you ever do is relax, and you want somebody else to take care of you.

Are you with me? Listen, notice this on the screen. I know it's going to get even more uncomfortable, but that's okay. The Bible says you have to love me. Laziness is not cute. It's unchristian.

Laziness is not cute. It's unchristian. Now, why in the world, and I'll explain that more, why are they acting this way?

Why are there a bunch of idols in the Thessalonian church? There could be a few different reasons. Number one, it could be that the culture has influenced them, because in Roman society, Romans viewed a lot of like the mundane work as only slaves do that work.

[27 : 24] Like, I'm a Roman, and therefore, like there's only certain things that's good enough for me to do. And so they would very much minimize just very basic mundane things.

Maybe that has influenced the church. It could be personal reasons. They may just be personally lazy. Here's actually one thing that we do know. I could say a lot on this, but then I would get in trouble.

There's a theological reason why some of them have gotten lazy. If you study the rest of the book, what you'll find out is one of the things that was going on was that there evidently had been a letter that had circulated saying that the second coming had already happened or was about to happen. And so this church is like in this great panic. They've gotten like all worked up, concerned about the day of the Lord. And as a result of them thinking like, man, Jesus is like coming any minute now, they just quit their jobs.

I mean, nobody does that today, right? I mean, literally there have been people because they thought they were predicting the end of the world that quit their jobs and just stopped doing anything.

[28 : 45] Why? Come on. I don't care if I get in trouble. Why would you quit your job? Because Jesus is coming.

Because if work is worship, wouldn't you want to be worshiping when Jesus comes? The only reason you would quit your job because you think Jesus is about to return is because you have a real imbalance in your life.

You have a complete disconnect between work and worship. Luther understood this because when Luther, Martin Luther, when Luther was asked one time, what would you do if you knew Jesus was coming tomorrow?

Do you know what he said? It's one of my favorite Luther quotes. Luther said, I'd plant a tree and pay taxes. Some of you are like, I wouldn't pay taxes, right? But what is Luther saying?

I'd plant a tree and pay taxes. What he's saying is, I would go about doing every day what I do every day. Because it's worship. And I want to be working when Jesus comes.

[29 : 56] Because it's significant to the very core of my spiritual life. This is really important for us to see. Now, regardless of the reason why they've become idle, it's clear that they have.

And their life is out of balance. And they're strong on rest. But they're weak on work. And Paul continues to call them out on it. Look at verse 8. Nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we may not be a burden to any of you.

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... Sounds a little harsh, doesn't it?

Paul here not only rebukes their idleness, he actually reveals the results of their idleness. One of the reasons why their idleness is such a problem.

Why your lack of working really is significant. And there's three that he gives. I'll hit them quick. Number one is idleness leads to ungodly dependence.

[31:08] And this is where I'm asking you to stop thinking like an American and think like a Christian. And how God has designed life and the world to be. Not how people in the news or the culture want life to be.

Paul's thinking is very simple. Is everybody with me? Do you still love me? Right? Paul's thinking is very simple. No work means no money. No money means no food.

No food means mooching. Becoming dependent when you don't have to be. I've already told you, Paul would be gracious to people that actually have real needs.

I may say that multiple times. Because I need you... He's not... He doesn't... Like one of the major themes throughout the New Testament is taking care of the poor. Taking care of the widow.

Like the leaders in the early church were very much about helping people that needed help. Amen? That's not what this is about. This is about people who actually could be working.

[32:17] They choose not to. And Paul says, let them go hungry. Because the problem is, if you feed them when they could be earning their own food, the problem is you're becoming...

You're enabling them. You're enabling them. So Paul here is not being insensitive to people that have actually real needs. He's being insensitive to lazy Christians who simply won't get off the couch and get a job.

And Paul, he's strong because he knows Genesis. Do you see why I started there? Like Paul understands how central this is to being an image bearer of God.

That this is central to what it means to be a human being. And he not only understands this in Genesis, he understands Proverbs. Proverbs 10, verse 4.

A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps and harvests is a son who brings shame.

[33:25] Proverbs 19, verse 15. Slothfulness cast into deep sleep. An idle person will suffer hunger. That's what Paul is saying.

Let an idle person suffer hunger. He's just quoting Proverbs. Because idleness can lead to an ungodly dependence. Here's a second reason.

Look at verse 11. Back in 2 Thessalonians 3. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but everybody say it. Preach, preacher.

What Paul is saying here is that idleness leads to ungodly division. Not only an ungodly dependence, but an ungodly division.

This word for busybody, it's the word for, you already know this, what's a busybody? A gossip. A gossip. Someone that likes to stir things up and like, did you hear about so-and-so?

[34:23] And you'll never guess. And you know, like they do at the beauty shop. You know, right? So I've been told, right? They're gossipers. In fact, in 1 Timothy 5, verse 13, Paul says, quote, that idlers go from house to house saying things they should not.

Because here's what we know is true. You know this. When you don't have anything to do, you tend to get involved in what others are trying to do.

That was a good place for an amen. Right? You missed it. When you don't have anything to do, what do you tend to do? Get involved in somebody else's work. In other words, notice this on the screen, your idleness ends up as busyness in the lives of other people.

And the Bible has very strong words to say about gossiping and slandering. Like, isn't it interesting that you have time to pick up the phone and gossip?

You have time to meet at a coffee shop and be critical. You have time to complain about programs at church that you don't even come to. You don't even attend.

[35:38] You've got time to hang out at the cubicle and badmouth your boss to a co-worker, but you don't have time to work? Interesting. Do you think that maybe, just maybe, you could use your time a little better?

And rather than just talking about other people, maybe you could do the work of the Lord? And maybe be a blessing to other people? And serve others?

And take care of their needs? One of my favorite, one of my favorite theologians in all of church history, you know this, Hank Senior. Hank Senior. He wrote a song, that was a joke, right?

He's pretty decent theology because the Apostle Paul, well, Paul doesn't quote him, he quotes Paul. He wrote a song, it goes like this, minding other people's business seems to be high-toned,

but I've got all that I can do just minding my own.

So won't you mind your own business? Because if you mind your business, sing it with me, you won't be minding mine.

[36:49] Hank Senior, everybody, right? It's 2 Thessalonians 3. Part of the issue when you don't have work to do is you get involved in things that bring division.

that rather than building up, think about this, this is so Genesis. Rather than as what God did, which is to go out into a chaotic world.

This is a chaotic world, amen? And while there's a lot of beauty, there's a lot of ugly and brokenness. So rather than going out into the world with work to do and bringing beauty and order in all the chaos, what you're doing is creating more chaos.

You're anti-Genesis. Is where God wants beauty and structure and order in His world, you're causing disorder and division and all kinds of chaos.

Like you're undoing the very thing that God wants to be done. Do you see that? Do you see that? And you're image-bearing. This is why it's so important.

[38:00] Your being an image-bearer is to go out into the world, to go out into the church and bring beautiful things and be a blessing and not a curse to people in your life, to those around you.

Look at verse 7. I've got to hurry up. Verse 7. This is just so much fun. Verse 7. You yourselves know how you ought to imitate us because we were not idle.

That's what Paul is saying. When we were with you, we weren't idle. 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.

Here's the third reason why this is a big deal is idleness leads to ungodly dishonor. Quickly here. If you read the book of Acts, what you're going to discover is that the apostle Paul was not afraid of work.

Amen? He was a very hard worker. In fact, there were times when the churches didn't have enough money to pay and support the apostle Paul even though it was his right to be supported.

[39:08] That's very much a biblical thing. But Paul understood that. So Paul, in addition to receiving support from the churches, some of you know this, just shout it out, what was Paul's other occupation at times?

He was a tent maker. That's exactly right. And he wasn't afraid to do that. In other words, like he realized that, listen, these churches, for example, like the church at Philippi was extremely poor, yet they gave out of their poverty.

But Paul didn't take advantage of those opportunities even though it was his right. He was willing to work and do other things and that's what he's talking about. Is that when we were with you, we weren't idle.

We worked. And you saw that. We worked hard. Do you know why? Because we didn't want to dishonor the work of Christ. We didn't want to shame the work of Christ by becoming idle.

So, if Paul was willing and often did work when he didn't have to, he actually would have had the right not to be a tent maker. What does it say about those in the church at Thessalonica who were not willing to work when they should have been?

[40:22] Do you see that? And Paul is saying you're bringing dishonor to the very name of Jesus because laziness isn't cute. It's unchristian. Like, your attitude towards work says something to other people about the gospel.

It's going to be very difficult for your boss to listen to you about Jesus when you never show up on time and when you do, you half-heart it. It's another good place for an amen.

But I'm not surprised I didn't get one. Because what does Paul say in another place? Do your work as unto the Lord.

Part of the reason why you half-heart it is because you're working for the wrong boss. You might write that down. That wasn't even in my notes.

You're working to get a paycheck rather than working to serve Jesus. And when that flips, your work ethic will become drastically different.

[41:32] Because now you have a deeper motivation than just a financial benefit. is that you realize in the beginning the first worker was God and He created. And He created me in His image to go out into this world with all my blood, sweat, and tears and bring beauty to it.

Whether that's fixing somebody's sink, whether that's doing somebody's hair, whether that's mowing somebody's yard, whether that's building a sermon to try to bless somebody's life. Like, do things that bring beauty into the world and do it with all your heart. Do it with all your heart. Are you with me? Alright.

So, notice this on the screen. I mean, yeah, hard work is not only worship, it's also witness. It's also witness. And Paul was willing to be a tent maker because he did not want to dishonor the witness of Christ.

Alright, one last point and we're done. Verse 12, brother. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the idols. Those idols we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

[42:50] So, Paul's response to all this is, hey, you're out of balance. You're way out of balance. You're not good intention. You're way more rest.

Rest is a good thing and you need to rest. But not every day. In fact, according to Genesis, it's like a six to one ratio. You don't have to take that legalistically, okay?

The point is, you work and you rest, but your spiritual life, not just your work schedule, your spiritual life is out of balance because work is worship.

And you need to learn to be good intention. So, get a job and work and make a living. Yes, rest.

And so, you say, but what do I do if this is somebody in my life or maybe I have a relative or a family member.

Maybe you have a cousin age, right? Or you're a Christian working somewhere with another Christian and you've noticed that they've become lazy, okay? Very quickly, here's how Paul says we need to approach that and then we're done.

[43:59] Number one, don't ignore the issue. Don't ignore the issue. These verses won't be on the screen, but in verse 15, it says, do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

As a brother. In other words, what Paul is saying here is call out their behavior because it's a spiritual issue. Laziness isn't cute.

It needs to be addressed, but it needs to be addressed in love. Why? They're a brother. And you should love them, okay? Not just beat them over the head with 2 Thessalonians 3.

Love them, right? And show that you love them by being willing to address this issue. Don't be mean, but don't be silent. So parents, if you've got that child who's just totally a mooch, you need to address it.

You need to talk about it. If you've got a co-worker who confesses Jesus and they do their work half-heartedly, you need to lovingly, graciously have a conversation about it.

[45:01] Are you with me? It's becoming less and less. I know. Number two is don't enable them. Don't enable them. Verse 10 is the reference for that.

For even when we were with you, we would give you this command if anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. That is, don't enable them. Don't feed them. Stop bailing them out.

You think you're being helpful, but you're actually adding to the problem. If they can work, they should work, and if they won't work, they'll eventually get so hungry, you know where they'll go?

To work, right? Isn't it amazing how that happens? The problem is, you don't ever let them feel that hungry. And you need to, I know that feels not loving, but Paul actually says it's very loving.

Because what are you bringing them back to? They're image-bearing from Genesis. And so love them enough to not let them mooch on you until they're able to have a godly dependence on Him.

[46:05] Thirdly is do not associate with them. This is the harshest one it seems. Do not associate with them. In verse 6, he says, We command you, brothers, in the name of the Lord Jesus, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness.

And in verse 14, If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person and have nothing to do with them that they might be ashamed. Now that seems harsh, but it's not harsh if we understand what Paul is saying and why work is so important, which I've spent a lot of time tonight trying to show you.

Here's what I think Paul means. Okay? Now you can correct me if you want to talk about it after the service, we can. What I think Paul means by have nothing to do with them is that you may need to temporarily cut the cord.

I don't think he may, never talk to them again, you know, in fact, if anything, he talks about addressing this with them. I think what Paul means here by have nothing to do with them is that that

thing that you're doing that's enabling them cut it off.

It may be that temporarily you have to have some distance in this relationship to get them to come around. But the whole point is what?

[47:22] To get them to come around. It's not to be mean. It's not to not show grace. But it's to bring them back to the very place they need to be. Does everybody see that?

Are you with me? And so Paul says, yes, some of you may have to go to that measure to get this point across. But when you see that work is about worship, that it's about the image of God, that it's about eternity, then you can understand why this is a big deal.

If you're dating with someone or you're engaged to a boy, right? I've always said this. I've always said this. A day will come when my two girls will bring boys to me.

And I have the shotgun loaded. All right? So, do you know what matters to me? And I think this will under, you'll understand why I'm saying this compared to what, based on what I've said tonight.

Do you know what matters to me just as much as they go to church or read their Bibles or pray? They know how to work.

[48:31] They have a job. They're not a mooch. I think that's the Greek word for something. Right? I made that up. Right?

Why? Why? Because work is worship. Work is worship. And your work ethic, to me, boy, right, is just as important.

It's just as important as how much time do you spend in the Bible. And if you think I'm wrong on that, you don't understand Genesis. Because what it means to be an image bearer of God is to work.

And to do your work as unto the Lord. Are you with me? All right. Fourth and finally, I can't wait to see the feedback on this one, right, is for you, for you, don't stop doing good.

For you, don't stop doing good. In verse 13, he says, as for you brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. That is, don't let the attitude of the idols affect your attitude.

[49:36] You keep working hard. You keep being diligently as unto the Lord. Because you know it's very easy, because some of you have even said this. You've said, well, if they're not going to carry the weight, I'm not going to carry the weight.

If they're not going to put in 40 hours, well, then I'm going to cut back too. Why would you let someone else's disobedience create your own? It doesn't make it, like what you're, because you're not obeying the Lord, oh, well, then I'm not going to obey the Lord.

That's nonsense. You keep doing good, and don't grow weary in it. You keep seeing your work as worship, and you work hard, and you rest, and you work hard, and you rest, and you keep these two things from Genesis 1 and 2 in tension.

Work is worship. Work is worship. And unlike Joaquin, when we show up every day doing the thing that God has called us to do, what I want you to feel tonight is you're glorifying God.

Amen? When you show up every day, or whatever your work schedule is, when you show up every day doing the thing that God has called you to do in that particular season of life, you are glorifying God.

[50:58] And that is precisely the way Jesus viewed His life. It's precisely the way Jesus viewed His life. In John chapter 17, look at this connection, and I'm done.

I promise I'm done. Watch. This is in Jesus' prayer. I say it. I glorified You, that is the Father, on earth, through my quiet times, through my church attendance.

I glorified You while I was on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave me to do.

Jesus viewed His work every day as worship to the Father, as the way that He glorified the Father.

And listen to me, listen. Listen, our very salvation rests on the fact that while Jesus was on earth, He showed up to work.

And He did His work until it was finished. And all God's people said, Amen. Let's pray together. Lord, thank You for this convicting message.

[52:22] It's very easy for us to get this out of balance. We certainly, in the culture, have this out of balance. We are not good intention when it comes to work and rest.

And this matters. It really, really does. Both rest and work are acts of worship. They're part of imaging you as you, in the very beginning, worked.

You created beauty and order in the world. You brought blessing in the world. And You rested. And then You created us in Your image.

And You called us to do the same. And so I hope that this evening, this has been a time to refocus the way we think about these things. To maybe bring us, like the Thessalonian church, back into a proper spiritual balance of the way we, like Jesus, glorify You on earth.

Lord, and now as we come to this time of communion, like the very thing we remember is how Jesus accomplished His work. What You sent Jesus to do on earth, He did in total obedience.

[53 : 36] And He glorified the Father through the cross. And so now, let us reflect on that. Let us think about for all the times that we have failed at work.

It is Your finished work on the cross that saves us, that has forgiven us, and given us eternal life. We thank You for that, Lord. Now we remember the cross. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.