

Series: 2 Thessalonians 2024

Title: Exhortation from our Lord

Text: 2 Thess 3: 7-12

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**2 Thessalonians 3: 7: For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8: Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.**

Study and prayer and preaching is labor. Paul labored to preach. But to keep the early church from charging a bad motive to Paul, Paul also made tents to support himself financially. He said, "*Not because we have not power.*" Paul had authority to command he and the other ministers be supported by the church. The Spirit of our Lord gave scripture declaring the Lord's preacher should be supported by those to whom he ministers. But so that none could charge Paul with a bad motive, he and the others supported themselves or were supported by other churches.

**2 Thessalonians 3: 10: For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11: For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12: Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.**

We looked at what the Lord commands us in dealing with a brother who walks disorderly. Today, we will look at the Lord's exhortation concerning an honest days' work.

**Title:** Exhortation from our Lord

**2 Thessalonians 3: 10...that if any would not work, neither should he eat...**

**Proposition:** In case someone thinks this is legalism, understand, this is the very word of our Lord Jesus Christ to his people. Notice this command is from our Lord Jesus in verse 12, "*we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*" It is the will of our God our Father and our Lord Jesus that his people work a job and eat their own bread and enjoy the fruits of their labor—it is the gift of God's own hand to us.

Ecclesiastes 2 :24 *There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.*

Ecclesiastes 3:13 *And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.*

But for God's saints, our Lord teaches us to work that we may provide for others in need.

Acts 20: 35: I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Ephesians 4: 28: Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Everything God the Father ordained in this life is to glorify his Son. So it is even with a man who works a job. Our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the salvation of God's elect was accomplished by working to give to us, his poor and needy people. That is our constraint in obeying our Lord in everything, even in working a day-to-day job.

## **OUR SAVIOR'S WORK FOR HIS PEOPLE**

**John 9: 4: I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.**

We saw in Acts 20 and Ephesians 4, we are to work to support the weak and needy. That was all God's elect spiritually. We are the poor and the needy. But Christ's love for the Father and for those given him of the Father was the constraint of his heart, "*I must work!*"

One, for the glory of his Father, Christ said, "*I must work.*" God his Father sent our Savior to work the works given him from eternity to glorify his Father by manifesting his righteousness on the cross. Christ must work to glorify God the Father by fulfilling the law of God. The Father sent Christ to make an end of sins, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, for those the Father chose from eternity. So our Savior said, "*I must be about my Father's business.*" So the preeminent constraint in the heart of God's child that makes us work the job God has given us is the glory of God our Father and his Son Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3: 22: Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23: And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Two, for the salvation of his bride, Christ said, "*I must work!*" God the Father chose a bride for Christ and gave her to Christ to work the works to provide her a perfect righteousness before God. It was for the salvation of the church, the bride of Christ, that our Lord was moved in his heart and said, "*I must work the works of him that sent me.*" When Christ's love for his church fills our hearts, our preeminent constraint to labor in whatever God has given us to do is for the sake of the church, for Christ's bride. And the constraint of a faithful husband is to work to provide for his bride is Christ's work for his bride. Above all a husband who is faithful to Christ desires to give his bride the gospel of Christ.

Ephesians 4: 25: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27: That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Three, for the salvation of each elect child in particular, Christ said, "*I must work!*" God's elect, you who know and believe Christ by his grace, are the poor and needy. David prayed,

Psalms 86: 1: Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I *am* poor and needy.

1 Timothy 1: 15: [Paul said] This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

We were orphans, poor and needy children, unable to provide for ourselves. God's elect come into this world with no spiritual life. Christ worked to provide himself. He is our Bread from heaven. We had no coat of righteousness. Christ worked out a righteousness to clothe us in his righteousness. We were unable to work to achieve life by our own hands. Christ worked the works that no man can work.

Hebrews 3: 5: And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6: But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

So the preeminent constraint that makes a faithful pastor and faithful saints labor in a job is Christ's work for us. We labor for the elect's sake. It is Christ's saving work for each elect child that makes a faithful father labor for their children. Again, above all it is to give our children the gospel of Christ.

2 Timothy 2:10: Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

These three reasons—for the honor of his Father, for the salvation of his bride, and for each elect child—Christ would not rest till he could say, "*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*" (John 17:4) He said, "*It is finished!*" By his work on our behalf, Christ provided all for his people. And Christ is All in his people.

So even in ordaining our day-to-day occupations, God is glorifying his Son who worked the works no man could work and saved us from our sins. You get up early in the morning and say, "I must work." Your wife and children must be fed and clothed, have shelter, and the daily necessities. But above all they need these unsearchable riches of Christ! And we labor that we have money so we can provide the gospel for our families, our friends, our brethren who Christ redeemed.

## ONLY GRACE IN THE HEART WORKS

Only the grace of God in the heart works this in his child. We see it when our Lord sent the Holy Spirit to the church on the day of Pentecost. This was the result of God's grace worked in their heart.

Acts 2: 44: And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45: And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. 46: And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47: Praising God, and having favour with all the people.

Carnal man has tried to imitate this in government. This is an election year. There is much talk right now about socialism and communism. But man cannot legislate grace and love in the heart. Paul's word in our text is not legalism. This will not and cannot be worked in the heart by law. It is only by the grace and love of Christ in finishing the work of redemption for his people revealed in the new heart by God's grace that makes sinners willing to provide for one another in love. When government tries to do this by law then the wealthier will despise the poorer and the poorer will take advantage of the wealthy.

We are thankful for government programs which provide for those that cannot work. But Christ said of those that can work but will not then they should not eat. Notice in our text, Christ's command is, "*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.*"

God's grace creates a new heart with a new constraint. That constraint is the love of Christ for us.

2 Corinthians 5: 14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

The child of God who God has blessed to have temporal things wants to provide for needy brethren because they see how Christ provided all for them. The child of God whose needs are met by brethren want to go to work so they can have to give to them that are need, especially these unsearchable riches of Christ.

Acts 20: 35: I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

There is only one thing that brings a believer as much happiness as receiving these riches from our Redeemer, it is giving them to another poor and needy sinner. The constraint of Christ's love in the heart does not make brethren take advantage of one another but it creates an equality so that the burden does not fall on one or two. Today, the one meeting the need will be the one with a need tomorrow. Tomorrow, the one whose need was met yesterday will meet the need of their brother today.

2 Corinthians 8: 13: For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: 14 But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be equality: 15 As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.

When they gathered manna, he that gathered much had nothing over and he that gathered little had no lack. God provided so that they each had what they needed. This is what faith in our Lord knows. The Lord shall provide.

Romans 8: 32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Matthew 6: 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

By God's grace we believe God. We know he shall provide. By Christ's labor for us, we are constrained to labor in whatever labor God has given us to do. Christ's love constrains us to do all for God's glory in Christ, for his bride the church, for the elect's sake. Not only to provide their temporal need but above all to provide the unsearchable riches of Christ.

We saw last time, believers never lose by providing for our brethren. We are made all the more happy because the needs of brethren are met and they glorify God for his grace to us and they pray for God's continued grace upon us. Anything that results in needy sinners giving glory and praise to our great Redeemer is what makes us happy! The grace and love of God in the heart—beholding how Christ who was rich, became poor, to make us rich—makes even our common everyday occupation to be a labor of love.

**2 Thessalonians 3: 13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.**

**Amen!**