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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
October 4, 2015  
19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: 1 Kings 19:1-18; Matthew 12:1-13

Hymns: 7; 408; 416; 644 (244:1-3)

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: 2 Thessalonians 3:5-13

<sup>5</sup> "Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

<sup>6</sup> But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. <sup>7</sup> For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; <sup>8</sup> nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, <sup>9</sup> not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

<sup>10</sup> For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. <sup>11</sup> For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. <sup>12</sup> Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. <sup>13</sup> But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good." (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow Redeemed:

**INTRO:** Compartmentalizing life. –

We do try to keep things separate in life. Often we feel we have too. After all if we take our religion to work we may find ourselves in difficulty. But it's not only that. We are inclined to compartmentalize a bit by nature. Church is on Sunday. WE gather here to worship and glorify our God. Work is Monday through Friday, and we don't often think of that as glorifying God. There may be times when we are struck by things that go on around us that we know don't belong in the Christian's life, but the actual job that we are doing, and how we are doing it becomes the focus of our working day. However, we shouldn't really forget our Lord at work. Indeed, the Lord may be a driving force for us in our jobs.

The Apostle Paul addressed a problem among the Greek men of Thessalonica. They loved their leisure. They had no great desire to work. They may even have excused this by referencing Paul's teaching that Christ's return was near at hand. So then they postulated, "What was the point of working so hard for one's daily bread?"

As we look at the gospel ministry of Jesus we should take note of how He worked. As followers of Christ we should willingly be –

**THEME:** Owning Jesus' Work Ethic.

That is where we begin the first verse of our text leads us in—

### **I. Applying the Power of the Gospel to Work.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:5** "Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ."

As we proceed into any aspect of life we look to the Lord for direction. The direction we receive from the Lord doesn't come only from the law telling us what to do and what not to do. The true direction for our lives comes to us from the gospel, from the love with which God has loved us. It is this love of God which is revealed to us in Christ Jesus that moves us to live in a manner worthy of our Lord. Paul would have us consider Christ. The

translation before us renders this reference to Jesus as the patience of Christ. A better rendering of this phrase would be to direct your hearts to the endurance, or the patient endurance of Christ. Paul isn't only encouraging us to remember how patient Jesus is with us in our weakness and sin, but more that we remember how patient Jesus was in enduring the work that was put before Him by His Father in heaven. Jesus came down from heaven to earth to save us from sin and death. To do this He not only took on our flesh and blood, but also our circumstances in life. He worked for a living. He worked as a builder, a trade He learned from Joseph who raised Jesus as his son. Jesus worked hard with His hands. He would have had callouses and perhaps blisters and scrapes and skinned knuckles as well.

When Jesus turned thirty He began His public ministry. He actively taught the people, both Jew and Gentile about the Kingdom of God walking from town to town and village to city throughout the region, and even as far as the regions of Tyre and Sidon on the Mediterranean Sea to the region of Decapolis east of the Sea of Galilee. He had compassion on the people for they were "as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:6). He had compassion of them also in the physical distress and healed them of their diseases. He had compassion on the people and put the people needs before His own. He worked hard, long hours, and when the day was over Jesus spent hours in prayer.

He faced rejection from the people because Jesus wasn't the kind of Savior they desired. He was rejected by many because He turned out not to be the kind of earthly political king they desired, one who would free them from the oppression of Rome. He was rejected by others because He had not come to provide them their daily bread so they wouldn't need to work. They objected to Jesus being the only way to eternal life, so many turned back and walked with Him no more (John 6:66). Jesus faced opposition from the scribes and Pharisees, and from the chief priests who were jealous of His popularity and the crowds that gathered to hear Him.

Jesus lived to free us from the oppression of the law and the tyranny of the devil. To do this He lived the perfect life of love. He fulfilled the law's demand so that we might be credited with His righteousness by a gracious God in heaven. That was only the

beginning of what Jesus patiently endured. He suffered at the hands of His enemies, enduring the curse of the law. He was reviled and abused and scourged and crucified. All this Jesus patiently endured to fulfill His mission, His work here on earth. He died and was buried. He rose again that we might have life. He ascended on high with His work complete.

He did it all and was not deterred by friend or foe, by want or pain. He patiently endured in His work so that we might have life and salvation. This is what Paul is referencing when he writes, to us also, “**Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ**”(v.5). When we consider how we make our way in the world, when we think about how we approach our jobs, our work, our responsibilities in life let us consider Jesus and His approach to the work that was put before Him, the responsibilities that He bore for us. Consider His patient endurance when things got tough.

This is the foundation for

## **II. Work as a Christian Tradition.**

Paul gave specific direction for the congregation, that they should not tolerate those who were idle and refused to work and take on their responsibilities in life.

**2 Thessalonians 3:6-9** But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. <sup>7</sup>For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; <sup>8</sup>nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, <sup>9</sup>not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

They certainly did not learn idleness from Paul. When Paul came to Thessalonica he made a point of supporting himself by working with his hands. It meant that he worked night and day. He worked at night teaching the people the truth about God and their salvation, and he worked all day to support his own physical needs. He

worked with hands, most likely at tent making which was his trade. He did this not because they couldn't afford to support Paul for his work of preaching and teaching, but to make a point about the honor of work. We read of this in Paul's first epistle to this congregation:

**1 Thessalonians 2:9** "For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God."

He didn't want to be a burden to anyone. In this he was setting an example that some in the congregation needed to see and understand, for there were able-bodied, fully capable people among the members of the congregation who simply refused to work. So Paul concluded in that first epistle:

**1 Thessalonians 4:10-12** But we urge you, ... <sup>11</sup> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

Work with your hands. Tend to your own business. Show the world that the Christian life is a meaningful, productive life that seeks the Lord's blessing for our temporal material needs from natural hard work. There is no shame in hard work. Indeed those Christians who cannot work feel bad that they cannot work. We follow after Christ. We work for Jesus, even when we are in the office or the field or the factory. Our whole life is in service to Christ our Lord. So we understand Paul as he wrote in --

**Colossians 3:23** "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men."

This is so key to a meaningful rewarding Christian life. We stay busy --

### **III. Using our Gifts and Abilities to Christ's Glory.**

**2 Thessalonians 3:10-13** For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

<sup>11</sup> For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. <sup>12</sup> Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. <sup>13</sup> But *as for* you, brethren, do not grow weary *in* doing good.

As we apply these comments of the Apostle to our own lives we may find it a tricky thing. Some of us here this morning are retired. Others are facing special challenges in life that interfere with the normal ability to work. Is Paul criticizing those who are facing these situations in life? No not at all, but neither should we conclude that just because one is retired or longer able to work at a paying job that one is exempted from what the Lord would have us learn from this text.

It is the Lord who has given gifts and abilities for us to use in this life. While we are to work diligently at our jobs while in our working lives, it goes beyond that. The Lord has given us new spiritual life so that we comprehend the Love of God, and our role in life is to reflect or represent this love of God before the world. So then as we are able, we are to do good to all men, as Paul encourages us in his Epistle to the Galatians:

**Galatians 6:9-10** “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

We are in this life to do good. We are encouraged to continue to do good, and not become tired or discouraged in working at doing what is good and right. We do good. We help the neighbor, or take on different projects at church such as mowing the lawn or cleaning church, or participating in a work day. We encourage those who are sick, or alone. We work around our own homes keeping them in good repair, or tending a garden. In all these ways we are using our God-given gifts and abilities to **work** with our hands and provide for ourselves and others.

This all redounds to the praise and glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we go to work in factory or field or office we give God the glory. As we work with our gifts and abilities and faith in

our homes or gardens we continue to glorify God in all we do. We pray for our neighbor and testify of our Lord Jesus in word and work. We shine as a beacon the hope that is in us. We are not doing all this to simply get rich and live in luxury, or to glorify ourselves before the world. No, we follow Jesus who cared for others and did good, and worked hard that His life might be the ultimate blessing for us who are saved. May we strive to be a blessing to others as we show forth the praises of our Lord and Savior in how we conduct ourselves in our work, whatever the work is the Lord has given us to do.

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.